

ARTFORUM

MAY 2025

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

"PROJECT A BLACK PLANET"
GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE

ANNE IMHOF
MEL BOCHNER



FRAGMENTS
EXHIBITIONS AND A BOOK
CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY
OF IAN HAMILTON FINLAY'S BIRTH

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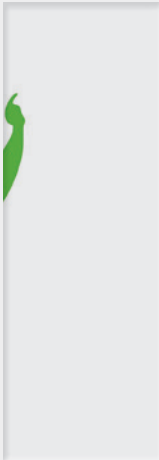
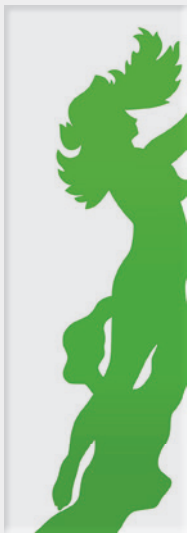
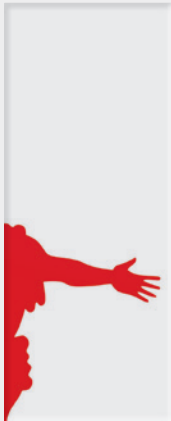
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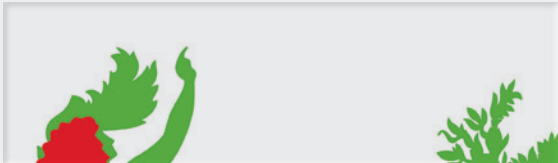
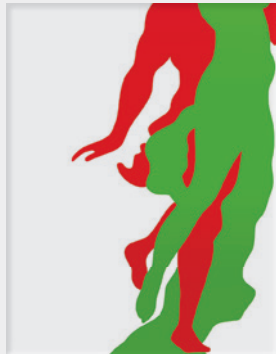
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MAY 2025



Curated and edited by Pia Maria Simig

I A N H A M I L T O N F I N L A Y



Apogee, 1970, oil on canvas, 60 x 50" © The Robert Indiana Legacy Initiative

Robert Indiana

The American Dream

New York
pacegallery.com

An abstract painting featuring bold, expressive brushstrokes in a variety of colors including deep reds, magentas, pinks, purples, blues, greens, and yellows. The background is a light, neutral tone, and the overall composition is dynamic and layered.

Martha Jungwirth

Der letzte Tag ist der schlimmste

Salzburg
May 2025

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ARTFORUM

MAY 2025

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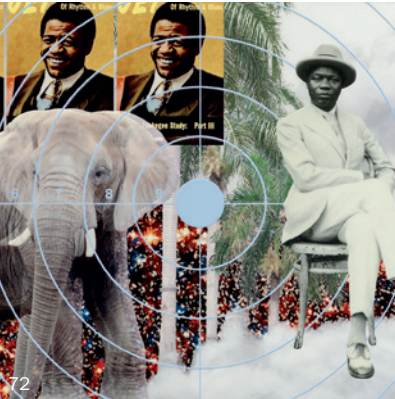
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Cover: Mel Bochner, *All or Nothing* (detail), 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, two parts, 100 × 85". (See page 84.)

From top: Rendering of "Enhanced Geothermality" from OMA's *Roadmap 2050: A Practical Guide to a Prosperous, Low-Carbon Europe*, 2010. Tavares Strachan, *Kojo* (detail), 2021, oil, enamel, and pigment on acrylic, 58 × 58". Gustave Caillebotte, *Jeune homme à sa fenêtre* (Young Man at His Window) (detail), 1876, oil on canvas, 45¾ × 31¾". Anne Imhof, *DOOM: House of Hope*, 2025. Performance view, Park Avenue Armory, New York, March 3, 2025. Photo: Nadine Fraczkowski.



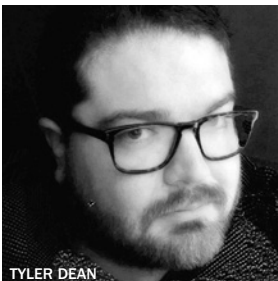
DELINDA COLLIER



JEFFREY WEISS



TOM McDONOUGH



TYLER DEAN



NAIMA MORELLI



ANDREW LAMPERT

DELINDA COLLIER is a scholar and professor and the dean of graduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her research explores the intersections of technology, media, and art in Africa, as seen in her books *Media Primitivism: Technological Art in Africa* (Duke University Press, 2020) and *Repainting the Walls of Lunda: Information Colonialism and Angolan Art* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016). Collier's work has appeared in *ARTMargins*, *Critical Interventions*, and *Nka*, among other publications. She has received numerous awards, including the Arnold J. Rubin Outstanding Publication Award (2024), and fellowships from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts and the Clark Art Institute. Through her teaching and scholarship, Collier examines postcolonial theory, media archaeology, and global contemporary art, with particular attention to the technological histories of artistic practice in Africa and its diasporas. In these pages, Collier reviews the Art Institute of Chicago's recent exhibition "Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica." PHOTO: ALAN JAY EPSTEIN

JEFFREY WEISS is an independent curator and critic living in Brooklyn, New York. He holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, where he also has served as an adjunct professor. From 2010 to 2018, he was a senior curator at the Guggenheim Museum. There, with conservator Francesca Esmay, he co-organized the Panza Collection Initiative, a ten-year Guggenheim-Mellon Foundation study project devoted to the museum's vast holdings of Minimal and post-Minimal art. *Object Lessons*, a book concerning the project findings, was published by the museum in 2021. Weiss also organized the exhibition "On Kawara—Silence," which appeared at the Guggenheim in 2015. From 2000 to 2007, Weiss was curator and head of modern and contemporary art at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, where he organized exhibitions of the work of Mark Rothko, Pablo Picasso, and Jasper Johns. A contributor to *Artforum* since 2001, he has published widely on topics in the history of modern and postwar art. This month, Weiss reflects on the life and pioneering work of Conceptual artist Mel Bochner.

TOM McDONOUGH is a professor of art history at Binghamton University in New York and a frequent writer on postwar and contemporary art. His books include *"The Beautiful Language of My Century": Reinventing the Language of Contestation in Postwar France, 1945–1968* (MIT Press, 2007) and the anthologies *Boredom* (MIT Press, 2017) and *The Situationists and the City: A Reader* (MIT Press, 2009). He has collaborated with artists including Leonor Antunes, Theaster Gates, Adam Pendleton, Wolfgang Tillmans, Danh Vo, Christopher Williams, and Haegue Yang. In 2023, his retrospective of the African American sculptor Ed Wilson (1925–1996) was on view at the Binghamton University Art Museum. He currently is assembling an anthology of critical writings

on Williams, forthcoming from the October Files series from MIT Press. In these pages, McDonough reviews Michael Asher's recent survey at Artists Space in New York. PHOTO: KITTY SCOTT

TYLER DEAN is a Los Angeles-based writer and English professor. He received his doctorate from the University of California, Irvine and teaches classes about vampires and the gothic at several Southern California colleges. His writing has appeared in *Victorian Studies* (on Carmen Maria Machado and being a Chicanx professor of Victorian literature), *Flaming Hydra* (on Ace of Base), and *Reactor* (where he regularly covers film and television, especially adaptations of George R. R. Martin novels, Mike Flanagan's horror series, and various cinematic Draculai). He is a cowriter of the award-winning retro game *Terratopia: March of the Demon King*, now available on Playdate. Previously, he has written for *Artforum* on television programs and movies such as *Mad Max: Furiosa* and *What We Do in the Shadows*. This month, Dean writes on the haunting nostalgia of the Showtime TV series, *Yellowjackets*.

NAIMA MORELLI is an arts writer and journalist based in Rome. She specializes in contemporary art from the Asia-Pacific and MENA regions. She has written for Al Jazeera, *ArtAsiaPacific*, the *Art Newspaper*, the *Financial Times*, *Il Manifesto*, *Internazionale*, the *Times of Central Asia*, *Middle East Monitor*, and *Plural Art Mag*, among others. She is the author of the books *Arte Contemporanea in Indonesia: un'introduzione* (Contemporary Art in Indonesia: An Introduction) (2015) and *The Singapore Series* (2018), as well as a monograph on Malaysian artist Yeoh Choo Kuan. She recently curated shows by Indonesian artist Eddy Susanto at Giudecca Art District in Venice and Burmese artists Nge Lay and Mayco Naing at the Festival Castelnuovo Fotografia, Italy. In this issue, Morelli examines Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu's installation *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0* from the 2024 Bangkok Art Biennale.

ANDREW LAMPERT is an artist, archivist, and writer. His moving image and performance work has been exhibited widely at institutions including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, as well as the New York Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival. The Further Reading Library, a new publishing imprint he launched in collaboration with Christine Burgin, has just released its first five titles. Lampert also coauthors the monthly advice columns "Hard Truths" and "Hard Choices" with Howie Chen in *Art in America*. The former curator of collections at Anthology Film Archives, he has preserved hundreds of canonical experimental and independent films and videos. *Teri Garr*, a musical project with L. GRAY, will debut later this year. This month, Lampert introduces a portfolio of photographs, sketches, and ephemera collected from the late playwright Richard Foreman.



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HAUSER & WIRTH

WHO & WHAT ARE WE?

A cough full of reproach.

Oh, to believe in another world

14 peripheral thoughts

I KNEW IT BEFORE YESTERDAY

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE STUDIO

1 MAY – 25 JULY

NEW YORK, 18TH & 22ND STREET

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IMMORAL AUTHORITY

“WHO ARE WE TO SPEAK, REALLY?” asks *Artforum* international editor Pablo Larios in this issue’s On Site report from the 2025 Islamic Arts Biennale in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, reflecting on his position as a Westerner. “It is easy to criticize the kingdom’s human rights abuses, crackdown on press, and heinous executions of dissidents. At the same time,” he notes, “there is a sense of palpable seriousness and substantiveness to the country’s ambitions to reform. This highly contradictory state of affairs comes at a moment when the West’s moral authority has all but crumbled.” Jacob Dreyer’s column on the international architectural firm OMA and its post-globalization future also opens with the author in Jeddah, similarly attempting to grapple with the seismic shifting of the moral high ground: “Many Saudis I speak to, including women and minorities, refer to a palpable sense of progress that stands in contrast to the grim political outlooks of countries like Germany, the Netherlands, or the US,” he writes.

Who are we to speak, really? It’s a question I also asked myself while walking the pristine sidewalks of Shanghai this March, my art-viewing constantly interrupted by news of democratic backsliding and attacks on diversity from the other side of the world. (How long will it be before US museums and galleries have to apply for exhibition licenses, as they do in China, I wondered? And how long until a show like TANK Shanghai’s solo presentation of Deborah-Joyce Holman—focusing on Black lesbians on film—is no longer feasible in the US? It appears now is the time for us Americans to humbly listen to those who have much to teach us about operating under challenging conditions.) From the horrific arrests of Mahmoud Khalil, Rümeysa Öztürk, and Kilmar Abrego Garcia to the barefaced blackmailing of universities and law firms, the US increasingly resembles those autocracies that trade civil rights for gleaming infrastructure—except without the gleaming infrastructure. Meanwhile, even some of those autocracies seem to be

working towards their own version of “modernization”: So much for so-called “American exceptionalism.”

In his tribute in this issue to the conceptual artist Mel Bochner, who died this February, Jeffrey Weiss argues that as America “lurched towards autocracy” in recent years, the political engagement of Bochner’s work only intensified. On this month’s cover, we feature his painting *All or Nothing*, 2012, from a series of works that replicate thesaurus entries in capital letters and high-contrast colors—their volume turned all the way up. Needless to say, the exhortation to PUT UP OR SHUT UP! FISH OR CUT BAIT! USE IT OR LOSE IT! LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT! SINK OR SWIM! GO HARD OR GO HOME!, et cetera, has gained a new valence in our current high-stakes moment. But as Weiss suggests, Bochner’s works are also political in a more profound way, given that they examine “the ambiguities and contradictions that lurk within systems of logic, measure, and symbolic representation” and “the way those systems both shape and are shaped by values, certitudes, presumptions, and blind faith.” Who are “we” to “speak,” really?

One can find possible answers to this question elsewhere in this issue. In their respective essays on the Art Institute of Chicago’s major undertaking “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrika,” Delinda Collier and Ivy G. Wilson focus on how twentieth-century Pan-Africanism circulated through visual tropes, sound waves, and air travel, knitting together a community on a global scale. Eric Crosby, director of Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Museum of Art, tackles the turn to “engagement” and, more recently, “relevance” as the primary metrics of art museum success—criteria that ultimately deny the agency of both museum workers and museum visitors, he argues. His text reverberates with Tom McDonough’s review of Michael Asher’s show at Artists Space, New York, and specifically Asher’s elaboration of institutional critique according to a “democratic, open impulse” that resonates today. Finally, in

her interview for The Checklist, Francesca Du Brock, chief curator at the Anchorage Museum, Alaska, articulates the importance of trying to “meet artists where they are” and focusing on local and regional perspectives and investments (echoing Crosby’s plea for museums to think “like international institutions with regional aspirations,” rather than the other way around).

Fundamentally, what is at stake in these texts is *community*: How do individuals aggregate into a collective? How do “we” build the categories that define “us”? How do individuals simultaneously participate in multiple communities? How do we build organizations that recognize us and our multiplicities, and allow us to recognize each other? How do we support each other, creatively and materially? These questions, which have been posed by artists, art historians, and critics alike, traditionally have been answered in part by our civic institutions. Here in the US, these institutions are now in dire straits: Since the previous issue of *Artforum* went to press, the Trump administration has attempted to close the Department of Education; canceled funds for the Institute of Museum and Library Services; redirected National Endowment for the Humanities grants to “patriotic programming,” including a “National Park of American Heroes”; and targeted Smithsonian Institution initiatives with “improper ideology,” specifically calling out the Smithsonian American Art Museum exhibition “The Shape of Power: Stories of Race and American Sculpture.” Especially in light of these developments, we will continue to publish texts that push back against attempts to circumscribe the work of artists, cultural workers, researchers, and educators. We also maintain our commitment to fostering an international dialogue between individuals and organizations who stand for art and against autocracy—not as a platform for a homogeneous, *globalized* “art world,” but as an *international* “forum” for the exchange of ideas, strategies, and hope. □

—Tina Rivers Ryan



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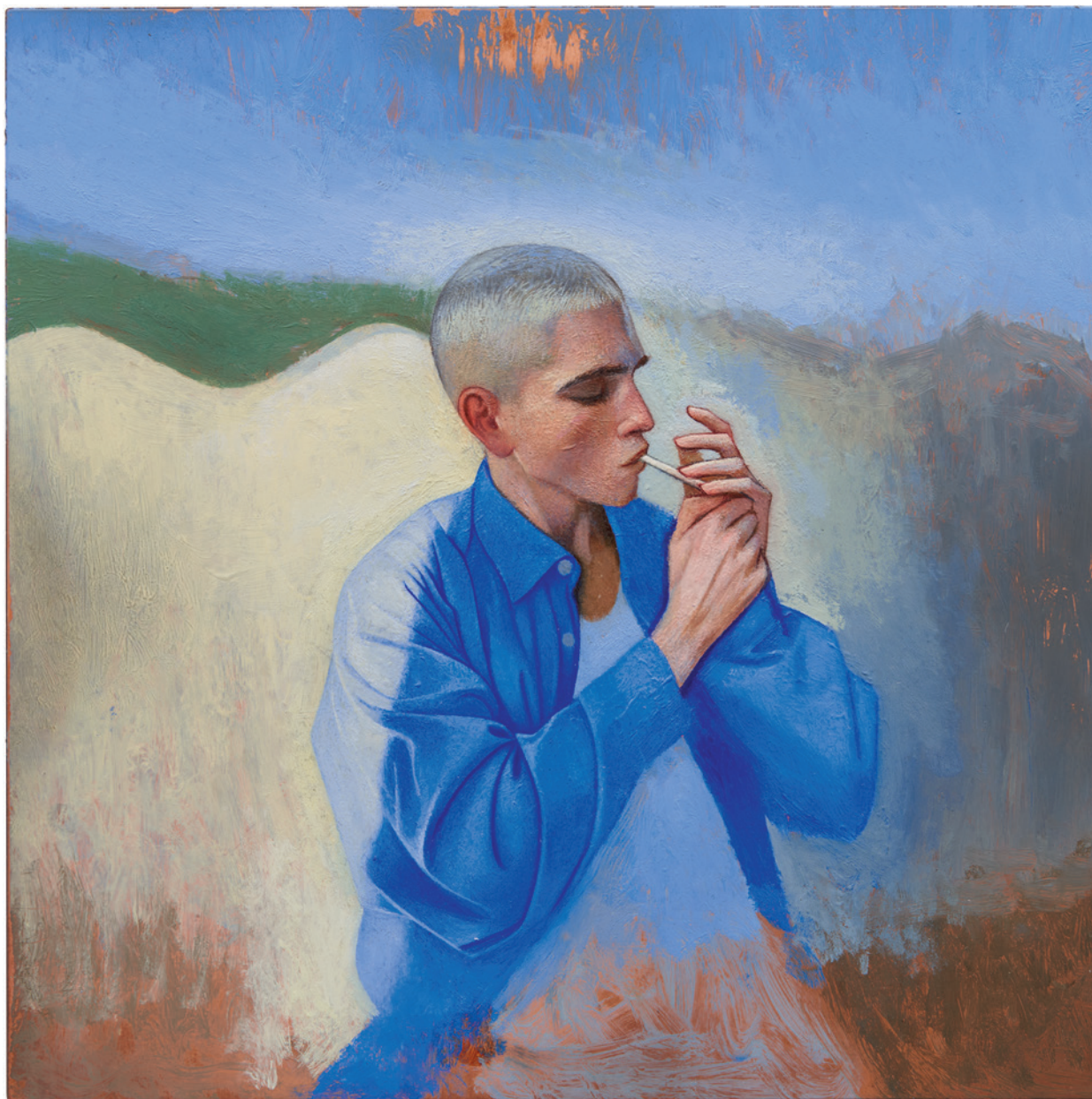
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Kiyoji Otsuji, Atsuko Tanaka wearing Electric Dress, 2nd Gutai Art Exhibition, 1956–1957, printed 2012, gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 in. (35.6 x 27.9 cm). © Tetsuo Otsuji. Courtesy of Musashino Art University Museum & Library and YOKOTA TOKYO. Image courtesy the Rachofsky Collection and the Dallas Museum of Art through the TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund, 2012.36.26
Peter Moore, Yayoi Kusama in her studio, New York, 1965, 6 gelatin silver prints, 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm). © Northwestern University.



RACHEL HARRISON

The Friedmann Equations

May – June

GREENE NAFTALI

SOFT POWER ■ Pablo Larios on the 2025 Islamic Arts Biennale

I FLEW TO JEDDAH because I wanted to see a society in the throes of change. Why, I wondered, is Saudi Arabia the place where peace deals are now brokered, international investment drummed up, and new cities carved into the ground? Just six years after the kingdom first opened for nonreligious tourism, international crowds now gather at the ancient heritage sites of AlUla and Diriyah, drawn by festivals and sustainable hotels. Soft power, innovation through tradition, and political might are aligning here in a way that reflects our new and contradictory world order.

All of this was on my mind as I headed toward the second Islamic Arts Biennale, installed across several stunningly high-ceilinged, fabric-clad enclosures in the Western Hajj terminal complex abutting Jeddah's King Abdulaziz Airport. The choice of site was both shrewd and significant: The huge, semi-outdoor terminal, which resembles a field of tall-stemmed, dust-colored umbrellas, opened in 1981 as a transfer site for religious pilgrims (it can hold up to eighty thousand at once) venturing to the holy sites. These are the same tourists who, in 2025, will make up a significant portion of the biennial's audience. If the idea of a new biennial inspires skepticism among jaded art viewers asking, "Why, here, now?" then—for starters—consider that, for many, it will be their first time engaging with a big art exhibition. Another justification is the sheer number of visitors: In 2023 there were about six hundred thousand of them, and this year they expect even more—pilgrims, local schoolchildren, political dignitaries.

Then there's the work. Earlier that day, I'd been squinting, mouth agape, at vitrines containing early manuscripts whose effect in their time was nothing short of world-historical. Here was a fourteenth-century manuscript copy (about the earliest we have) of the *Liber Abaci* (The Book of Calculation, 1202), in which Fibonacci revolutionized European mathematics by introducing Arabic numerals and positional notation. It's in this text that the digit 0 was first rendered in Roman script. The tiny oval in front of me, handwritten on a piece of parchment in angular red-and-black calligraphy, would eventually enable everything from decimals to bookkeeping to binary code. The exhibition shows how it was only thanks to Fibonacci's reading of Muhammad bin Musa Al-Khwarizmi that we use it today. Al-Khwarizmi, a ninth-century Baghdad-based polymath, traveled to India and marveled at a device tradesmen used to make calculations quickly: the concept of zero. Al-Khwarizmi's *Kitab al-Jabr wa-al-Muqabalah* (written between 813 and 846 CE)—here in a rare thirteenth-century manuscript edition, loaned from the King Abdulaziz Library in Medina—is the book on algebra (from the word *al-jabr*, "restoring," in its title). The word *algorithm* is a partial transliteration of Al-Khwarizmi's name.

The old story is that the knowledge of antiquity was preserved during the Dark Ages by medieval Muslim scholars. This show refines that narrative. Actually, in the flourishing world of eighth-century Abbasid Baghdad, Greek manuscripts were not simply translated but revised, challenged, and improved. The tenth-century astronomer al-Sufi translated Ptolemy—and in the process corrected his star catalogues, leading to the first illustrated star chart in history. Here, twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts from Iraq and Morocco, loaned from Doha and the Vatican, revive al-Sufi's triumph of astronomy, mathematics, and visual imagination, culminating in the stellar image of Andromeda, the mythical daughter of the king of ancient Ethiopia. It's an exhilarating story. Through the hand of Al-Khwarizmi and Fibonacci, Al-Tusi and Copernicus, we glimpse the leaps, inventions, annotations, and disputations that are the shaky foundations of our world. And we will likely never see them displayed this way again.

While I was looking at the vitrines, a man in a white cassock stood next to me. He was a librarian from the Vatican, speaking English with a young Saudi woman in a hijab. The document in front of them contained the earliest-ever translation of the holy text of Islam, which is also the magnum opus of Arabic literature. The translation was preserved via a polemical refutation of the Qur'an by Nicetas of Byzantium, itself representing the first time the Qur'an was read against itself as a theological document. Now, in 2025, I heard the Vatican representative telling the Saudi woman how Nicetas had misread the Qur'an by shoehorning Islamic concepts into a Christian theological framework. Where else would one see a young woman in a headdress talking to a scholar from the Vatican about a Byzantine-era disputation against "heretical" Islam?

The Islamic Arts Biennale is one of two new biennials helmed by the same organization, the Diriyah Biennale Foundation, founded by the Saudi Ministry of Culture

All around us, the world is sliding into regression. For Saudi Arabia, the future isn't simply a forward step, but a shuffle between precedent and progress.



Spread from Abulrahman al-Sufi's *Kitab Suwar al-Kawakib al-Thabitah* (Book of Star Constellations), 1125, ink on paper with leather binding, closed 9 5/8 x 7 1/4". Andromeda with the Arab horse, camel, and fish asterisms. Copied by 'Ali bin 'Abd al-Jalil ibn 'Ali bin Muhammad.



Left: View of the Islamic Arts Biennale, “All That Is In Between,” 2025, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Foreground: Ahmed Mater, *Magnetism*, 2009. Background: *Sitarah* (curtain), 1970. For the Ka’bah Door, Makkah al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia. Photo: Marco Cappelletti. Above: Evliya Çelebi (attributed to), map of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (detail), late 17th century, printed facsimile after an original of watercolor and ink on paper, 1’ 4 1/8” × 14’ 1/8”.

in 2020. It’s the soft-power part of Mohammed bin Salman’s sweeping effort to assert Saudi influence on the world stage and wean the nation off of oil. Modern states have diversified economies and multipolar alliances; they have sustainable hotels, food, and tourism; they have mechanisms for government accountability, non-corruption, and digital access; and they also put on biennials. Here worldwide audiences congregate to be entertained and educated, complementing the kingdom’s massive infrastructural expansion. Crucially, culture also serves a convincing role locally, educating and employing a young workforce. The Saudi public is overwhelmingly young (63 percent are below thirty, among the youngest in the Gulf) and its personnel increasingly female (the proportion of women employed has more than doubled in a decade). If he’s to make good on his ambitions, the crown prince ought to see that a young, increasingly female Saudi workforce represents the kingdom’s most obvious, and most humane, agency for change.

Ambition: That’s the word that stands out when I consider this biennial’s assembly of expertise, resources, and thoughtfulness of execution. Its directors—Julian Raby, director emeritus of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art; author and historian Abdul Rahman Azzam; Amin Jaffer (director of the Al Thani Collection and former V&A curator); and Saudi contemporary artist Muhannad Shono—mobilized a massive network of international institutions. The Vatican is perhaps the most eye-raising envoy, loaning (among

others) a twenty-three-foot-long world map documenting the seventeenth-century Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi’s travels. (It’s quid pro quo: The Saudi government is funding its restoration.) There are tiles from the Alhambra, musical instruments and arms from the Al Thani Collection in Paris, ornate jewel boxes from the West Nusa Tenggara State Museum in Indonesia. Iranian velvets come from Italy’s Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art. A talismanic shirt contains the entire text of the Qur’an, loaned from Qatar. Some thirty institutions collaborated on this colossal project, including the Two Holy Mosques of Islam, of which the Saudi monarch is the official custodian.

Revealed in Mecca and Medina in the early seventh century, compiled in the decades that followed, polemicized after that, and since then the source of religious devotion and legal doctrine, the Qur’an also possesses a unique aesthetic beauty—a union of oral poetry and visual form—that is readily apparent to the faithful. Those of us who are secular viewers will have to make do with approximations about how its holy function is intertwined with its aesthetic form. We can, however, be stunned by the sheer diversity of Qur’anic copies and translations on display—from Russia, from the Sahel, from Sicily but translated into Hebrew. Pilgrims, whether hailing from Xinjiang, Andalusia, or North Africa, would traditionally leave their most cherished copy of the Qur’an at the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina (built by Mohammed and containing his tomb). Even

for the outside observer, the assembly’s beauty is remarkable. “The intellectual and often physical conflict surrounding the Qur’an which is being played out today in the Islamic world is also a conflict about its aesthetic dimension, which some feel is in danger of being lost,” wrote the German Iranian scholar Navid Kermani. “It never failed to amaze me when I asked [Egyptian cabdrivers] why, when caught in a traffic jam in scorching heat, they put on a cassette of Qur’an recitations. . . . The answer I heard again and again was, ‘It’s so beautiful (*gamiil gaddan*)!’”

In comparison with the show’s historical treasures, works by Saudi contemporary artists, many arranged outdoors as in an Islamic garden, seemed thin. I got a better glimpse of living tradition by admiring the architectural carvings done by the students in the King’s Foundation School of Traditional Arts: Their wooden *rawasheen* (traditional wooden inlay and coverings that line the balconies of old Jeddah houses) made the show’s historical through line—mathematics unfolding into astronomy, music, and architectural proportion—come alive.

For many, though, the key exhibit here will be the *kiswa*, the black textile covering that envelops the Kaaba in Mecca. Each year, a new *kiswa* is sewn, the old one taken down and cut to pieces. This is the first time a *kiswa* has ever been seen publicly as a complete object outside Mecca. It’s a formidable presence, transducing the magnetism of the billions of people who encircled,



EXHIBITION VIEW, "DESCENT INTO PARADISE: KADER ATTIA", MO.CO., MONTPELLIER, 2024.
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Two views of the Islamic Arts Biennale, “All That Is In Between,” 2025, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Left: Holy Kaaba kiswa panels, 2023–24. Right, center: King’s Foundation School of Traditional Arts and Royal Institute of Traditional Arts, roshan window, 2023. Photos: Marco Cappelletti.

approached, and prayed toward this object five times daily. I may not respond to these religious artifacts in the same way as my Muslim neighbor, and certainly I cannot grasp their significance as a pilgrim might. But that speaks to this biennial’s impressive versatility: It brings together high and vernacular, sacred and profane, balancing the universalizing, centralizing force of Islam with the diversity of its manifestations.

Still, the display of religious objects here invites serious questions. What does the word *Islamic* in *Islamic art* mean? Because Islamic territories included (among others) Persian, Byzantine, Chinese, and Central Asian geographies, not to mention Andalusian Spain and North Africa, many works correctly termed *Islamic* were made for or by non-Muslims: Jews, Christians, or Buddhists living in Muslim-dominated territories. Art historian Oleg Grabar convincingly argued that the term *Islamic art* is a generic category that resolves, imperfectly, the tension between local traditions and overarching ideals—similar to “Baroque” or “Gothic.” For Grabar, “Islamic art” is a “special overlay, a deforming or refracting prism which transformed, at times temporarily or imperfectly, at other times permanently, some local energies and traditions” in the wake of Muslim expansion.

Throughout the twentieth century, Western institutions wedged together distinct artistic traditions under specious principles of visual similarity: Decorative arts, calligraphy, and architecture were lumped with a mish-mash of objects of dynastic origin: glassware, carpets, miniatures, arms. Even today, the Al Thani Collection’s

presence in Paris—not Qatar—is a product of Qatari cultural diplomacy, as well as prestige: Europe as the traditional pedigree-granting site. In twentieth-century London, real erudition often overlapped with the private interests of foundations and collections amassed via economic and political tumult (such as the Khalili Collections); the geographic diffusion of art from Islamic territories meant that serious research often stressed some aspect (such as Persian or Mughal-era art) while ignoring others. The intricate, Nasrid-period architectural ceiling loaned here from the Victoria and Albert Museum is typical: Made in Granada, al-Andalus, it was unearthed from a ruin (bought, most likely, for about six pounds) around 1880 by the V&A’s globe-trotting director, Caspar Purdon Clarke, and is loaned now to Jeddah in what is partly a symbolically restorative act.

Only recently has the Muslim world begun to take charge of writing its own history through objects. While Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha have set the stage, an unbelievable number of new museums are set to open in the region or have recently done so. The Lusail Museum (opening in 2029) and the Art Mill Museum (set to open in 2030) in Qatar and Abu Dhabi’s Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum, Natural History Museum, and Louvre will aim to reverse this westward drift of objects of Islamic origin, and reorient their research and display. But will they succeed?

“If you want soccer,” a curator told me during my trip, “you can build stadiums, or you can build neigh-

borhoods.” His meaning was clear: The Gulf’s plum infrastructural projects—Qatar’s soccer stadiums, Abu Dhabi’s swish museums—are impressive, yet lack anything but a fly-over public. Saudi Arabia, while it has its share of prestige projects, is determined not to repeat the mistakes of its neighbors. Instead, it is making local inroads, investing in its public and building “neighborhoods” such as this biennial. The elephant in the room is the mass of human rights abuses. The optimist in me believes that change is on the way. Consider the radical labor program known as *nitaqat*, also called the “Saudi Nationalization Scheme.” Begun in 2011, *nitaqat* incentivizes companies to employ Saudi workers over international ones. After a rocky start, including swift expulsions of illegal migrants, the *nitaqat* program might be finding its footing. An educated, largely young, and predominantly Saudi workforce will occupy the roles that international workers—from high-flying expats to exploited migrants—have taken on in Dubai or Doha.

Change in today’s Saudi Arabia is forward-looking and retrograde. Women have been granted a few hard-earned rights. Other groups must continue to wait. It is easy to criticize the kingdom’s human rights record, crackdown on press, and heinous executions of dissidents. At the same time, there is a sense of palpable seriousness and substantiveness to the country’s ambitions to reform. This highly contradictory state of affairs comes at a moment when the West’s moral authority has all but crumbled. Who are we to speak, really? All around us, the world is sliding into regression. For Saudi Arabia, the future isn’t simply a forward step, but a shuffle between precedent and progress.

Getting this right will mean balancing the need for modernization with the dictates of tradition. It’s a complicated dance. When Saudi Arabia’s reform-minded postwar ruler King Faisal decided to launch the country’s first television network in 1965—hoping to use the media as soft power to counter the pan-Arab nationalism brewing across the Red Sea, in Egypt, in the wake of the Suez crisis—the idea of scantily clad Western actors on screens upset the country’s religious conservatives. The king’s own half brother led an ambush against the television network in Riyadh; he succeeded in damaging the network, but got himself killed by security forces in the process. Ten years later, when King Faisal leaned down to greet his nephew at an event at the palace, the nephew pulled out a gun and shot him at close range, avenging the killing of his father. Within the hour, the ruler was dead. “Our religion requires us to progress and advance and to bear the burden of the highest tradition and best manners,” King Faisal had written. “What is called progressiveness . . . be it social, human, or economic progress [is] all embodied in the Islamic religion and laws.” Whether the country can realize this seeming contradiction remains to be seen. For the moment, this event is a significant step during a crucial moment in the kingdom; at minimum, it represents a sort of curious progress in the history of biennials. □

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Lam Palo 1, 2024 [detail]. © Marco A. Castillo.
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DELIRIOUS NEW WORLD ■ Jacob Dreyer on OMA and architecture after globalization



Clockwise, from top: OMA, CCTV (China Central Television) Headquarters, 2012, Beijing, August 5, 2023. Photo: VCG/VCG via Getty Images. Rendering of “Enhanced Geothermality” from OMA’s *Roadmap 2050: A Practical Guide to a Prosperous, Low-Carbon Europe*, 2010. Slide from AMO’s 2010 education program introduction for the Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture, and Design, Moscow.

IT IS EARLY FEBRUARY. A European man in a baseball cap, overdressed in a warm jacket, walks through Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: the historical port to Mecca. Reinier de Graaf, a partner at superstar architecture firm OMA, comes to Saudi Arabia often these days—though not for any religious pilgrimage. He’s here to work on a biennale, jury an award for mosque architecture, and mop up any other opportunities to be found here.

“The Middle East is the region in the world where modernization currently runs its most unfettered course,” De Graaf says to me. De Graaf, who joined OMA in the 1990s and founded its research arm, AMO, is telling me

about the diminished role that Europe plays on the world stage. I agree with him; so do Chinese friends who tell me that Saudi Arabia reminds them of China in 2008. Many Saudis I speak to, including women and minorities, refer to a palpable sense of progress that stands in contrast to the grim political outlooks of countries like Germany, the Netherlands, or the United States.

Europe, for its part, seems to have been decentered in a world where its leaders are not invited to meetings where Americans and Russians decide Europe’s future—in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, in the US—the superpower that underpinned it all and shaped a now-crumbling

postwar world order—a staid, conservative establishment has gone haywire and is turning inward. It’s obvious that time is running out for a business model built on exporting Western visions. The world just doesn’t seem to need European auteurs as it once did. The old world lies in ruins, a new one still to be constructed. What’s a builder to do?

As the promise of globalization—or, at least, the centrality of Westerners within it—is called into question, the artists, designers, and architects who once chased interesting gigs worldwide are left wondering what’s next. Nativist politicians in mind, it would be tempting to call this deglobalization, but that’s not quite accurate. China is expanding its reach globally, opening for visa-free travel, and Saudi Arabia is gaining a new centrality. New York is still a world capital, but for all the wrong reasons: Donald Trump and finance. Globalization isn’t over; it’s just that the West may no longer be its protagonist.

For fifty years, the architects and thinkers of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture passed through the world’s different cities, planting the seeds that would, years later, germinate into the disjointed world we live in today. During the defining period of globalization—say, between China’s entry into the WTO and the first election of Trump—OMA managed to do what nearly every creative firm wanted to do: bring innovative ideas to the world, from Seattle to Beijing to Moscow, and make good money without compromising on a bold, auteuristic vision.

It was, after all, the “delirious New York” of the ’70s that inspired Rem Koolhaas to cofound the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in 1975—the same Manhattan that sits at the genesis of Trump’s career. The playful lines of the CCTV (China Central Television) Headquarters, built by OMA in Beijing in 2008, are emblematic of that era in China (as the joke goes, that was Weimar-era Beijing, and we all know what came after Weimar). It’s from there that China’s state media apparatus beams messages out through China, Africa, and the world today.

In the mid-2000s, OMA had to make a choice: The firm could pitch either the new World Trade Center in New York or the CCTV Headquarters. By opting for Beijing, though, they opened themselves up to criticism from anxious American exceptionalists. In retrospect, the choice to make CCTV was historic—one of the seeds planted by OMA that may engender new ideas still. Koolhaas had written that China could easily “use its dominant position, the force of its numbers, its economic power, and its central government to lead the world into a digital future,” adding that “in communism, engineering has a high status, its laws resonating



OMA, Zardun by NEOM, 2024–, Gulf of Aqaba, Saudi Arabia. Rendering.

with Marxian wheels of history.” In 2014, Xi Jinping condemned its weird architecture; he probably dislikes the CCTV tower as much as its Western critics do. And for the same reason. The integrative project of an architecture that brought Chinese communism to the global conversation was seen as disruptive both for Chinese communists and liberals sitting in New York or Washington. It was the sort of compromise between communism and capitalism that made both sides uneasy.

In 2017, OMA began building Qatar’s National Library. Just consider: The emir of Qatar asked the firm for ideas about how to define and represent the country’s national identity. It was an echo of the globe-trotting proposals of years past. In books like *Content* (2004), OMA collected wild ideas of a culturally cross-pollinated future in which Europeans couldn’t compete, the built environment descended into “junkspace,” and Beijing was a superior revision of Manhattan’s cityscape. Shopping malls would become the public space of the future, and the social order of Dubai and Lagos would become regnant. The fiction of the architect as a solitary genius would go, and utopia as an idea would end. The book’s ideas are all the more remarkable in retrospect, because ChatGPT didn’t help come up with any of them; as a contemporary critic wrote, that book was “an attempt to illustrate the architect’s ambiguous relations with the forces of globalization, an account of seven years spent scouring the earth—not as business traveller or backpacker but as a vagabond.”

At various points, OMA suggested building a Berlin-style wall in London (1972, before the firm was officially founded); an infinitely unfolding, translucent library in Paris (1989); a vertical city, or “hyperbuilding,” for 120,000 people in Bangkok (1996); and a master plan for the disputed Spratly Islands (2006) in the South China Sea. These provocations were considered absurd at the time. The architects were in the vanguard, moving faster than capitalism itself. As artist Xu Bing told the

New York Times in 2008, “now artists and the government are basically the same . . . both running with development.” OMA captured the zeitgeist. But now the season has shifted.

There’s a certain moment when a culture turns from aesthetic visions to political ruptures. Consider China in the ’30s, when an assistant librarian at Peking University turned into the warlord who became Chairman Mao. It feels like the current moment is one in which certain intellectuals could turn into warlords overnight. Today, the US government wants to annex Greenland, China is building a weird futuristic capital in a polluted prairie—the Xiong’an New Area—and the remaining source of great commissions for OMA, Saudi Arabia, is constructing NEOM to the tune of nine trillion dollars. Now our governments are more radical than our artists, who tag along behind asking the government to be careful, to consider unintended consequences. Only the worst go in for passionate collusion, like the architects who once proposed installing a hot-plate-like earthwork that would burn the feet of migrants as they attempted to cross Trump’s border wall.

No wonder the avant-garde is turning in on itself. As De Graaf told me: “I feel that the world is getting ahead of itself to such a degree that it is impossible to be *ahead* of anything. Radical, or ‘out of the box,’ thinking has become mainstream politics. In that context, maybe the only way for the architect to retain relevance is by being a radical voice of reason.” OMA—which tried (and failed) to bid on the construction of Tesla factories—was once architecture for Nietzscheans, beyond good and evil. It was perhaps easier to take that position when our governments were dedicated to good, even if they were hypocritical in that pursuit. Nowadays, it feels less like edgy rebellion to be beyond morality. What if we want to be virtuous and build something useful? That would be the real vanguard position in a world of nasty, opportunistic jerks.

Go East, young man, Koolhaas said, I read in some magazine or other. Reader: I listened. I was bored and annoyed by life in London and New York a generation ago. There, I would need to spend a lifetime’s salary on rent, making coffee for some self-important creative, pretending to keep up with circuitous debates—all while the world around us got more and more unequal. Middle-class life in the US wasn’t where the action was. Impatient in an arid time where everything seemed to be done already, I read about OMA’s adventures in Lagos and Asia and everywhere else with the voracious interest that, as a child, had led me to devour *Tintin*. And indeed, there is something analogous about the boy adventurer from Belgium who goes around the world solving mysteries and the intrepid Dutch architects who showed up in scary places like post-Soviet Moscow and, using little more than their intelligence, ended up meeting world leaders. So I applied to Strelka, the OMA-built research institute (2009) in Moscow that allowed Western urbanists to cosplay as Soviet technocrats, going around Magadan and imagining what we might build there. I was admitted—then the Russian winters gave me second thoughts. Soon, off I was to Shanghai.

In the modernist paradigm, it was the vanguards of culture—the artists, architects, musicians, and designers—who culled from the bleeding edges of the global economy and reimagined it as content for the middle classes to digest and understand. The shock of the new that great works gave us was a culmination of that process. Quite recently, however, that dynamic has been reversed. As capitalism has just effected a regime change within the United States, I wonder: Can culture really pave the way forward, or will it be structurally reactionary these next years, in the sense of being forced to react, rather than act? Are the arts still exciting, or are they just a refuge for those unable to intervene meaningfully in the face of war, cryptocurrency, and climate change? The question of OMA’s future seems tied to the broader uncertainty surrounding the future of a left-leaning, New York-to-Europe intellectual sphere in a world descending into tribal rivalries. For what is my *ummah* if not that vagabond consciousness produced for many generations in what we hesitate to call the West, and which OMA captured so brilliantly?

Architecture might have been a search for adventure, but we always told ourselves that we were pursuing utopia. When we spoke in Jeddah, I asked De Graaf about the moment in the Qur’an when paradise is regained. He answered that, despite our nostalgia about utopias, we don’t know what that is anymore. “I fear that the twenty-first century is yet to teach us the dangers of an absence of utopian thinking.” Perhaps the new task, then, is not to predict the future, but to intervene in the present. Not as prophets, but as strategists, pragmatists, and subversives within the system. And at the same time, read books, mind our gardens, raise our children, and wait for destruction to end—and build a new world. □

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GOOD WILL HUNTING ■ Tyler Dean on *Yellowjackets*



Yellowjackets, 2021, promotional image for a TV show on Showtime, Season 3. From left: Misty Quigley (Christina Ricci), teen Misty Quigley (Samantha Hanratty). Photo: Victoria Will/Paramount+ with Showtime.

YELLOWJACKETS (2021–), the Showtime drama about a girls’ high school soccer team stranded in the Canadian wilderness and forced to resort to cannibalism for survival, has been a perfect study in how to link nostalgia (half the show is set in the mid-to-late 1990s) with horror. Etymologically speaking, to haunt is to return, to go back home; the word has roots in the Old Northern French word *hanter*. Haunting has since become the province of ghosts but, at its core, nostalgia is also a kind of haunted activity.

Millennials, especially older millennials—or Xennials, as they are sometimes termed, using a portmanteau of Gen X and millennial—have had a rough go of it. They encountered the internet as teenagers, experienced 9/11 at the end of high school or the beginning of college, endured the 2008 global financial crisis just as they were embarking on their careers, and were plunged into the abyss of Trumpism and Covid-19 during their mid-thirties to early forties—souring many of their hopes to find financial stability or start families. Their parents, mostly Boomers, raised them with a mix of inflated expectations and a novel child-rearing philosophy that focused on bolstering self-esteem by lavishing praise for their every action—totemizing those much-maligned participation trophies. American millennials were told that they both could and must succeed but experienced a peripeteia that heralded a seemingly unending fall: no homeowner-ship, no living wages, and seemingly no representative

government. That downturn is why unfettered nostalgia (look to the endless parade of ’90s-themed BuzzFeed listicles, reboots of beloved shows, and childhood toy rereleases) haunts so much Xennial culture.

Yellowjackets, too, is deeply invested in yearning for the past. It is full to the brim with on-the-nose needle drops, from Ace of Base’s 1993 hit “The Sign” and Garbage’s “#1 Crush” (1995) to Limp Bizkit’s “Nookie” (1999). The show loves diegetic references to fin de siècle experiences: In one episode, a character describes pausing a VHS copy of the 1994 movie *Color of Night* to see Bruce Willis’s penis; in another, one of the girls recalls mindlessly watching *Eureeka’s Castle* (1989), a kids’ show, with a younger relative who was dying. Most of all, however, the series is dedicated to casting rising stars of the ’90s—Lauren Ambrose, Christina Ricci, Juliette Lewis, Melanie Lynskey, Hilary Swank, and Elijah Wood—as its adult characters. In a program about the dissonance between children and the adults they become, it is the familiar faces millennials had crushes on, idolized, and identified with as youths who play the traumatized, haggard elders.

In *Yellowjackets*, the flip side of all this nostalgia is horror. The show is coy about the windigo-like presence, referred to as “The Wilderness,” that the survivors worship and are stalked by. Does this entity encourage the characters’ ritual violence, or did they invent it to cope with the trauma of having to eat their teammates? Was their

youth monstrous because they had to survive, or because they were favored by a malign spirit? Its cult (magical or not) is full of witchy totems—animal fur masks, crowns of antlers and flowers, and arcane symbols that would not be out of place in *The Blair Witch Project* (1999).

Sometimes reduced in critiques to a distaff, teenage *Lord of the Flies*, *Yellowjackets* reaches for something more than the idea that lean times turn people into animals. The continual lesson of the series is that childhood traumas are not merely inescapable but actively alluring. In the show’s present day, the survivors are drawn to the possibility that returning to ritualistic sacrifice and cannibalism might be the cure to their adult ills—that the Wilderness can be appeased, and that their nineteen months of hell were, in fact, halcyon days.

Seeing the former teen actors’ *unheimliche* faces—as aged and worn as the audience who grew up with them—adds another layer of dread. This is a trap, designed to give Xennials that pang of heartache. It’s hard not to be drawn in by the girls’ woodland parody of a school dance, decked out in the tatters of their dELiA*s catalogue dresses while bursting into a rendition of Seal’s 1994 single “Kiss from a Rose.” The scene is affecting and intoxicating, even though you are watching the prelude to a ceremonial hunt—a hallucinogenic orgy of blood and forbidden appetites. *Yellowjackets* is not only an exercise in nostalgia; it is a cautionary tale about the dangers of letting nostalgia take hold.

The ’90s was not an idyllic time. Like today and the decades before it, it was full of racism, homophobia, and misogyny. Its youth culture was ruled by a disaffectedly casual sense of cruel irony that turned its comedies dark. Few subjects were taboo under the mythology that the Boomer generation had solved America’s systemic problems—which made it easier to embrace the lie of a “post-racial America” during the Obama years, paving the way for Trumpism. But for most Xennials, the ’90s were the last era in which even the illusion of safety, of prosperity, of uninteresting times was possible. Weaponizing nostalgia in eras of strife is not new: The Third Reich embraced German Romanticism; one “Makes America Great Again” by overselling and whitewashing the ’50s. The past is always haunted and, no matter how seductive its call, trying to relive it always leads to blood spilled. In this light, *Yellowjackets* is a sympathetic rebuke of weaponized nostalgia. It looks to its disenfranchised, millennial audience, so very drawn to this siren song, and reminds them that, when they finally wield power, they cannot attempt to re-create the past, lest they cannibalize their future. □

TYLER DEAN HOLDS A PH.D. IN ENGLISH FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, AND IS A PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE AT A NUMBER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLEGES. HE TEACHES COURSES ON VAMPIRES, VICTORIAN NOVELS, AND THE GOTHIC. (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

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Helen Frankenthaler, *Vista*, 1980

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TOP TEN

KARLA BLACK

Karla Black is a Scottish artist based in Glasgow. She is known for her large-scale, abstract sculptures made from everyday materials such as paper, plaster, cosmetics, and powders. Her solo exhibition at the Kunstraum Dornbirn in Austria opens in June.



1. Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Little Sparta*, Pentland Hills, Scotland, August 2010. Photo: Gardenpics/Alamy. **2.** Steve McQueen, *Bass*, 2024, sixty ceiling-mounted LED light boxes, sound. Installation view, Dia Beacon, NY. Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio. **3.** Karla Black's cottage, Angus Glens, Scotland, 2024.



1

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY, *LITTLE SPARTA*, 1966–2006 One of the best artworks in the world is this garden, or poem, or sculpture—no one knows quite what to call it—in Scotland's Pentland Hills. Finlay made it in collaboration with his wife, Sue Finlay. The artist died in 2006, but the work continues to evolve in concert with nature.

Little Sparta requires pilgrimage, especially in these times; it stands there hostile to war, a monument in equal contemplation of both terror and the divine. It is an homage to and critique of Western “civilization,” culture, intellect, artistry, brutality, and bloodshed, realized through the aesthetics of ancient Greece, the French Revolution, and World War II. It is built from stone, concrete poetry, and cultivated land.

Finlay ran Little Sparta as a separate city-state. The land, inherited from his wife's family, was originally named Stoneypath, after the militaristic Greek municipality. It was the site of a dispute in the 1980s when a local council refused to recognize the site's temple as a religious building and tried to impose exorbitant taxes upon Finlay. But he won out in the end, saving his work from falling prey to bureaucracy. I was lucky to walk the hills of Little Sparta with Finlay many times, a formative experience for me as a young artist. There is a lot of humor in what he did—I still believe that art can't be intellectually sharp without that.

If you go there, you will enter beneath a gated archway to the gardens, on which is carved the words of the French revolutionary Louis Antoine de Saint Just: A COTTAGE. A FIELD. A PLOUGH / THERE IS HAPPINESS.

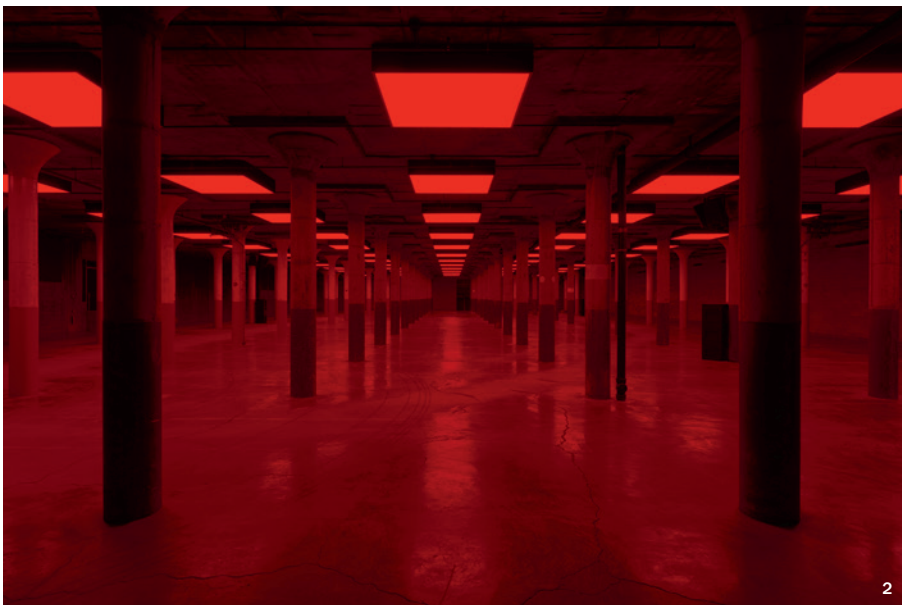
2

DIA BEACON, NEW YORK Dia Beacon organizes the most sensitive presentations of art in an institutional setting that I have ever witnessed. The way that a generous, significant slice of an individual's oeuvre is exhibited, with multiple works given so much space to exist, is really a lesson in how to do it right. We see art here as it was meant to be seen and, as such, its power remains intact and unedited.

3

MIDTOWN FARMHOUSE, MY COTTAGE STUDIO IN THE ANGUS GLENS, SCOTLAND

I've been thinking a lot lately about building a studio/museum as a permanent site for my art on the half acre surrounding my cottage. I'd want a traditional drystone farm building, but carbon neutral and half underground—something inspired by both Little Sparta and Dia Beacon. I realize that as time goes on I'll have to home my work myself. There are many institutions that have my sculptures in their collections, but I feel a need to store and display them correctly. If I do this, I can totally dissociate the art from language. I can leave out the raw materials I use in my work—such as plaster powder, Vaseline, and body moisturizers—while cleaning and conserving it in place, rather than removing a piece and remaking it each time it is shown. Pitting “formless” art like mine up against markets and museums is necessary and I fully engage in those manipulations. However, I dream of my own space where I no longer need to compromise or explain. The conditions around my art are also a part of it, and without a spotlight on that, I don't know what the sculpture really is.



2



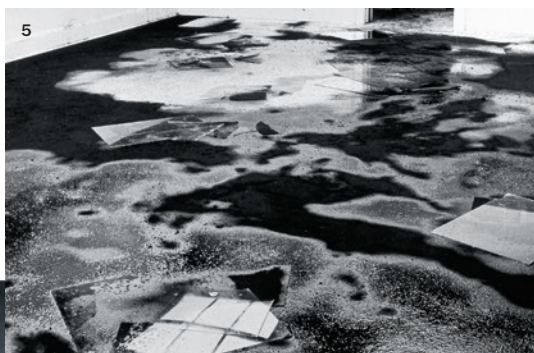
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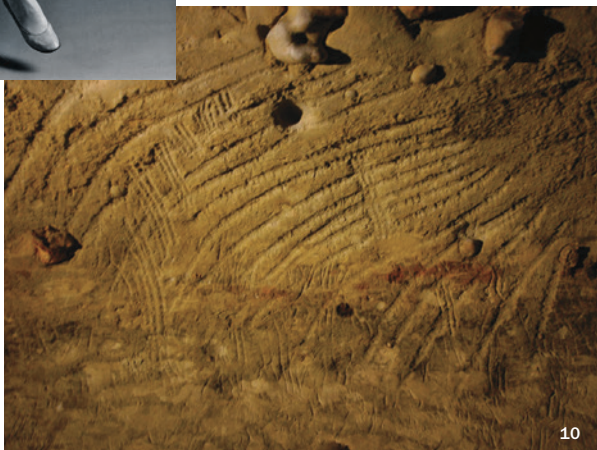


8

4. Suzanne Jackson, *P.K. Blossoms*, 2021, acrylic, acrylic detritus, Stonehenge and Bogus papers, shredded mail, produce bag netting, carpet trim, string, D-rings, 50 x 84". Photo: Patrick Jameson.
5. Barry Le Va, *Room 2 of a 3-Room, 3-Part Installation, Utilizing Various Quantities of the 3 Materials*, 1969, Spanish red oxide, plate glass, mineral oil. Installation view, Walker Art Center. 6. Lynda Benglis, *The Graces*, 2003–2005, cast polyurethane, lead, stainless steel, 95 x 30 x 27"; 103 x 26 x 26"; 113 x 21½ x 23". Photo: Christopher Burke Studios. 7. David Hammons, *Untitled*, 1992, human hair, wire, metallic Mylar, sledgehammer, plastic beads, string, metal food tin, pantyhose, leather, tea bags, feathers, dimensions variable. 8. Promotional image for Bobby Baker's *Drawing on a Mother's Experience*, 1988. Photo: Andrew Whittuck. 9. Ocher drawing on silcrete flake from Blombos Cave, South Africa, 73,000 years old. Photo: Craig Foster. 10. Finger flutings made by children in moonmilk ca. 14,000–20,000 years ago, Rouffignac Cave, France, 2006. Photo: Dr. Leslie Van Gelder.



7



10

4

SUZANNE JACKSON, *P.K. BLOSSOMS*, 2021 (THE MODERN INSTITUTE, GLASGOW) There is so much to admire about Jackson and her expansive, legendary practice. I love this work for its courage of shape and form, the way it frees painting from the frame, and for its bright transparency. This piece is everything—practically nature itself.

5

BARRY LE VA, *ROOM 2 OF A 3-ROOM, 3-PART INSTALLATION, UTILIZING VARIOUS QUANTITIES OF THE 3 MATERIALS*, 1969 (WALKER ART CENTER, MINNEAPOLIS) Le Va used dangerous materials—iron oxide, mineral oil, and broken glass—for this seminal work. It was first installed at the old Walker Art Center only because the space was about to be demolished. This piece epitomizes my interest in sculptures that admit within themselves the fallacy of an object's stability. I wish that I could see this sort of sculpture all the time in galleries and museums, and that it wasn't only possible to make this type of art when the place it's being displayed in is getting destroyed.

6

LYNDA BENGLIS, *THE GRACES*, 2003–2005 Benglis is a giant of sculpture. I love these works—for their scale, for their pinkness, and for the artist's deft handling of unwieldy materials (cast polyurethane, lead, and stainless steel) to create towers of strength and crystalline beauty. *The Graces* exemplify the longevity of the artist's creativity. She is such an impressive shape-shifter and continues to dish out delightful surprises. Benglis is always innovating, never static.

7

DAVID HAMMONS, *UNTITLED*, 1992 This piece, made out of hair sweepings from Black barbershops, is astounding, as is all of Hammons's art. There is no hierarchy of materials or form here. His sculptures are the "almost" or "only just" type of works that I love the most. His direct connection to the materials he knows from everyday life allows them to breathe freely.

8

BOBBY BAKER, *DRAWING ON A MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE*, 1988 Baker felt that the importance of motherhood—and, indeed, parenting as a whole—was shockingly undervalued. So she devised this performance, in which she creates an "action painting" by spilling common household foodstuffs—Guinness, beef, milk—onto a double bedsheets laid out on the floor while she interrogatively talks about domesticity, being a mother, and her life as an artist. Like jangled nerves, this work has resonated throughout my life, as I made every exhibition in the presence of my daughter until she was ten years old. The emotions of this piece bleed everywhere, harking back to Carolee Schneemann and the history of feminist performance art as well as the physical anarchy of the Viennese Actionists. Mess, like abstraction, is a political stance. Akin to Little Sparta, Baker's performance is an act of protest and resistance. She does not shy away from the anger of the fight.

9

A 73,000-YEAR-OLD PIECE OF CROSS-HATCHED OCHER, FOUND IN THE BLOMBOS CAVE, SOUTH AFRICA There is much debate among anthropologists about whether this item is the earliest artwork ever made because of the deliberate mark-making on it, which ostensibly evidences the dawn of human consciousness. This little scratched stone blows my mind, as it opens the door to questions about artistic creation and how "conscious" it might be; to my mind, art is somehow both an intentional and an accidental form of activity.

10

FINGER FLUTINGS IN THE "MOONMILK" FROM ROUFFIGNAC CAVE, FRANCE During the Upper Paleolithic era, peoples in the caves of Europe and Australia dragged their fingers along a wet carbonate substance known as moonmilk. These Ice Age men and women created handprints and other kinds of patterns. The marks will never dry, and remain as malleable as the day they were made. This, to me, like the scratched piece of ocher, is what art really is—an impetus toward physical response. I'm always trying to get back to that. □

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Instagram: @annalaudel.gallery Tue – Sat 12–7, Sun 12–6
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Instagram: @arteristanbul Tue – Sun 11–7, Thu 11–8

Until August 3 Koray Arış: The Skin We Live In, curated by Selen Ansen
Until August 3 Kader Attia: Asesinos! Asesinos!, curated by Selen Ansen
Until October 5 Franz Erhard Walther: Attempt to be a Sculpture, curated by Selen Ansen
May 8 – January 11, 2026 Under Pressure Above Water, curated by Nilüfer Şaşmaz

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contact@bozluartproject.com bozluartproject.com
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Until May 17 Merve Zeybek: Inner Map

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Sat – Sun 10–7
Until August 17 Doug Aitken: Naked City, curated by Jérôme Sans
Until August 17 Collection Exhibition: Prélude Eternal; curated by Necmi Sönmez, Ph.D

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Until May 25 John Armleder: Ever
May 30 – June 29 Jorinde Voigt

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Until May 18 Jak İhmalyan
May 23 – June 22 Mustafa Hulusi: Acid Horizon

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Until May 25 İzzet Keribar: Journey of Colors, curated by Demet Yıldız Dinçer and Şevval Yürüten
Until July 20 Collection Exhibition: Floating Islands
Until December 12 Ömer Uluç: Beyond the Horizon; curated by Öykü Özsoy Sağnak, Nilay Dursun, and Naz Uğurlu Benek
Until December 28 Chiharu Shiota: Between Worlds, curated by Öykü Özsoy Sağnak and Yazın Öztürk
Until December 31 Renzo Piano: Genius Loci, curated by Ümit Mesci

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salt@saltonline.org saltonline.org Instagram: @salt_online
Tue – Sat 11–7, Sun 11–6

Until June 15 Salt Artistic Research and Production Grant Exhibition: Merve Mepa, Ali Taptık, and Aslı Uludağ (Galata)
Until August 10 Lives of Animals, programmed by Joanna Zielińska and Fatma Çolakoglu (Beyoğlu)

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Until September 21 Stop Drawing: Architecture Beyond Representation,
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Until October 25 The Large Glass, curated by Alex da Corte
May 16 – August 31 Mediterranea: Visioni di un mare antico e complesso,
curated by Viviana Panaccia and Eleonora Farina
May 23 – January 7 Nacho Carbonell: Memory in Practice, curated by
Martina Muzi
May 30 – August 31 Il Foro Italico di Enrico del Debbio, curated by Ariane
Varela Braga and Carla Zhara Buda
May 30 – August 31 In viaggio per l’arte: La galleria Pieroni, 1975–1992;
curated by Stefano Chiodi
May 30 – October 26 Stadi: Architecture of a Myth; curated by Manuel
Orazi, Fabio Salomoni, and Moira Valeri
May 30 – November 23 Douglas Gordon: Pretty much every film and
video work from about 1992 until now’ish . . .

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May Dylan Rose Rheingold: Shadow Talk
May Georgina Stone: Odyssey

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212 594 0550
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Until May 10
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347 232 4897
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May 17 – June 14
Madeleine Tonzi
May 17 – June 14
Gregory Euclide

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June 4 – July 19
Natalia Zourabova: Nightlight

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May 31 – July 6
Sasha Feldman: TERRORCOTTA!

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David Opdyke, *Overlook*, 2025, gouache, acrylic, and ink on 42 vintage postcards on panel, 32 × 40". Courtesy the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

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Incomplete Trajectories

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Stephen Bron, *Back to the Garden*, 2025, oil on canvas, 14 × 18". Courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York.

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June 18 – October 5 Tomokazu Matsuyama: Morning Sun

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Young and Virginia L. Montgomery
Until June 29 Jessica Hargreaves: Girls at the End
of the World

Geary

34 Main Street, Millerton, NY 12546
info@geary.nyc 518 592 1503 geary.nyc
Fri. – Sun. 11–5

Until June 8 William Corwin
June 28 – August 10 Dana Sherwood

Hessel Museum of Art | CCS Bard Galleries

33 Garden Road, Bard College, Center for Curatorial Studies,
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504
ccs@bard.edu 845 758 7598 ccs.bard.edu
Wed. – Sun. 11–5

Until May 25 15: The 2025 Graduate Student Curated Exhibitions
June 21 – October 19 All Manner of Experiments: Legacies of
the Baghdad Group for Modern Art
June 21 – November 30 Stan Douglas: Ghostlight

Jane St. Art Center

11 Jane Street Suite A., Saugerties, NY
info@janestreetartcenter.com janestreetartcenter.com
Thurs. 12–5, Fri. – Sat. 12–6, Sun. 11–5

Until May 10 Group Show: Super Cute
May 17 – June 21 Lindsey A. Wolkowicz

Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art

State University of New York at New Paltz,
1 Hawk Drive, New Paltz, NY 12561
sdma@newpaltz.edu 845 257 3844
newpaltz.edu/dorskymuseum
Wed. – Sun. 11–5

Until July 13 Landmines: Dawoud Bey, Christina Fernandez,
Richard Mosse, and Rick Silva
Ongoing A Living Collection
Ongoing Space to Create

The School | Jack Shainman Gallery

25 Broad Street, Kinderhook, NY 12106
info@jackshainman.com 212 645 1701 jackshainman.com
Sat. 11–6

May 17 General Conditions



ASHWINI BHAT: REVERBERATING SELF

Through January 11, 2026



**John Michael
Kohler Arts Center**

jmkac.org

Ashwini Bhat: Reverberating Self is supported by the Kohler Trust for Arts and Education, Ruth Foundation for the Arts, the Mellon Foundation, the Frederic Cornell Kohler Charitable Trust, Kohler Foundation, Inc., and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Richard Mosse

Broken Spectre



© Richard Mosse. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Photo: Jack Hems.

**June 27, 2025–
September 27, 2025**

Art Vault, Santa Fe
540 S. Guadalupe St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505 428 0681
thomafoundation.org





LUCE, *NUEVOS CENTROS*, 2024, ten metallic letters with LED lights, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and 1 Mira Madrid.

1 mira madrid

Argumosa 16, 28012 Madrid
Tel: +34 912 40 05 04 E-mail: info@1miramadrid.com
Web: www.1miramadrid.com

Until May 24 LUCE: NUEVOS CENTROS

baró galeria

Carrer de Can Sanç 13, 07001 Palma de Mallorca
Tel: +34 971 31 14 59 E-mail: info@barogaleria.com
Web: www.barogaleria.com Instagram: [@barogaleria](https://www.instagram.com/barogaleria)

Until May 30 Tiago Tebet: 8 Billion Flowers
Until May 30 Antonio Kuschmir: Donde florece lo salvaje
May 29 – June 1 ARCOLisboa

galería ehrhardt flórez

San Lorenzo 11, 28004 Madrid
Tel: +34 91 310 4415 E-mail: galeria@ehrhartdflorez.com
Web: www.ehrhardtflorez.com Instagram: [@ehrhartdflorezgallery](https://www.instagram.com/ehrhartdflorezgallery)

Until May 10 June Crespo: SOLAR
May 22 – June 21 Ulrich Wulff
May 29 – June 1 ARCOLisboa

galería elba benítez

San Lorenzo 11, 28004 Madrid
Tel: +34 913 08 04 68 E-mail: info@elbabenitez.com
Web: www.elbabenitez.com Instagram: [@galeriaelbabenitez](https://www.instagram.com/galeriaelbabenitez)

Until May 10 Jorge Pardo
May 22 Claudia Andujar: A Sônia

hauser & wirth

Illa del Rei, 07700 Menorca
Tel: +34 871 010 020 E-mail: menorca@hauserwirth.com
Web: www.menorca.hauserwirth.com

Please contact gallery for information.

galería helga de alvear

Doctor Fourquet 12, 28012 Madrid
Tel: +34 914 68 05 06 E-mail: galeria@helgadealvear.com
Web: www.helgadealvear.com Instagram: [@galeriahelgadealvear](https://www.instagram.com/galeriahelgadealvear)

May 8 – July 12 María Lara

galería hilario galguera

Doctor Fourquet 12, 28012 Madrid
Tel: +34 635 97 53 34 E-mail: madrid@galeriahilariogalguera.com
Web: www.galeriahilariogalguera.com

Until May 31 Mat Collishaw: Vivisystems

mayoral

Consell de Cent 286, 08007 Barcelona
Tel: +34 934 88 02 83 E-mail: info@galeriamayoral.com
Web: www.galeriamayoral.com Instagram: [@galeriamayoral](https://www.instagram.com/galeriamayoral)

Until July Marria Pratts: Florescència
June 19–22 Art Basel

prats nogueras blanchard

Beneficencia 18B, 28004 Madrid
Tel: +34 915 06 34 84
Mendez Nuñez, 14, 08003 Barcelona
Tel: +34 915 06 34 84
E-mail: info@pratsnoguerasblanchard.com
Web: www.pratsnoguerasblanchard.com
Instagram: [@pratsnoguerasblanchard](https://www.instagram.com/pratsnoguerasblanchard)

Until May 24 Cabello/Carceller: La habitación gris:
Escenario 1 (Barcelona)
May 8 – July Hannah Collins: Soy fuego (Madrid)
June 19–22 Art Basel

travesía cuatro

Calle San Mateo 16, 28004 Madrid
Tel: +34 91 310 00 98 E-mail: galeria@travesiacuatro.com
Web: www.travesiacuatro.com Instagram: [@travesiacuatro](https://www.instagram.com/travesiacuatro)

Until May 10 Manuel Solano: Egogénesis
Until May 15 Miriam Inez da Silva, curated
by Cristiano Raimondi
May 22 Willa Wasserman

spain

WASHINGTON DC — VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON DC

HAMILTONIAN ARTISTS

1353 U St. NW, Washington, DC 20009
202 332 1116 · info@hamiltonianartists.org
hamiltonianartists.org · @hamiltonian_artists

May 17 – June 21
Kat Nguyen

HEMPHILL ARTWORKS

434 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20001
202 234 5601 · gallery@hemphillartworks.com
hemphillartworks.com · @hemphillartworks

May 10 – June 21
Amy Schissel

TOUCHSTONE GALLERY

901 New York Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001
202 682 4125 · info@touchstonegallery.com
touchstonegallery.com

Until June 1
Marcia Coppel
Until June 1
Susan Dykeman
June 4 – July 6
Marthe McGrath
June 4 – July 6
Dee Levinson

TRANSFORMER

1404 P St. NW, Washington, DC 20005
202 483 1102 · info@transformerdc.org
transformerdc.org

May 10 – June 14
Marie Gauthiez
June 21–28
Duke Ellington School of the Arts Senior
Spotlight Exhibition

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220
804 340 1405 · info@vmfa.museum
vmfa.museum · @vmfamuseum

Until September 28
Frida: Beyond the Myth

madre



Euforia Tomaso Binga

18.04—21.07.2025

A cura di | Curated by Eva Fabbris con | with Daria Kahn

Tomaso Binga, *Il confessore elettronico*, 1989
fotografie della performance | performance photos
Courtesy Archivio Tomaso Binga, Roma



madre
laboratorio d'arte contemporanea
per la città contemporanea
via S. Maria 10
00187 Roma
06 4781 1111
www.madre.it



BELGIUM

ANTWERP

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY

Jos Smolderenstraat 50, 2000 Antwerp
Tel: +32 3 251 14 17
E-mail: info@timvanlaeregallery.com
Web: www.timvanlaeregallery.com

Until May 17
Eline Vansteenkiste
May 22 – July 5
Dirk Braeckman

BRUSSELS

XAVIER HUFKENS

44 rue Van Eyck, 1050 Bruxelles
107 rue St-Georges, 1050 Bruxelles
6–8 rue St-Georges, 1050 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 639 67 30
E-mail: info@xavierhufkens.com
Web: www.xavierhufkens.com

Until May 17
Matt Connors (St-Georges)
Until June 21
Nathanaëlle Herbelin (Van Eyck)
May 15 – July 12
Ulala Imai (Rivoli)
June 5 – August 2
Cecilia Vicuña (St-Georges)
June 19–22
Art Basel

RODOLPHE JANSSEN

rue Livourne 32, 1050 Bruxelles
rue Livourne 35, 1050 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 538 08 18
E-mail: info@rodolphejanssen.com
Web: www.rodolphejanssen.com

Until May 10
Thomas Leroy: Twist and Turns (Livourne 35)
Until May 10
Alice Tippit (Livourne 32)
May 22 – July 12
Gert & Uwe Tobias (Livourne 32 & 35)

GALERIE GRETA MEERT

rue du Canal 13, 1000 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 219 14 22
E-mail: info@galeriegretameert.com
Web: www.galeriegretameert.com

Until May 3
Group Show: Once the Block is Carved, There Will Be Names; curated by Jonathan Griffin and Liam Everett
May 23 – July 5
Catharina van Eetvelde
May 23 – July 5
Valerie Krause
June 19–22
Art Basel

NOSBAUM REDING GALLERY

60 rue de la Concorde, 1050 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 411 11 85
E-mail: reding@nosbaumreding.com
Web: www.nosbaumreding.com

Until June 28
Fatiha Zemmouri

GALERIE LA PATINOIRE ROYALE BACH

rue Veydt 15, 1060 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 533 03 90
E-mail: contact@prvbgallery.com
Web: www.prvbgallery.com

Until June 7
Lebohang Kganye (Nef)
Until July 26
Carlos Cruz-Diez (Project Room)
May 8 – July 26
Hannah De Corte (Verrière)
June 21 – July 26
Summer Group Show (Nef)

ALMINE RECH

Abdijstraat 20 rue de l'Abbaye, 1050 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 648 56 84
E-mail: contact.brussels@alminerech.com
Web: www.alminerech.com

Until June 7
Sasha Ferré
June 12 – July 26
Janet Werner
June 12 – July 26
Jenny Brosinski
June 19–22
Art Basel and Art Basel Unlimited

SORRY WE'RE CLOSED / SEBASTIEN JANSSEN

39 rue des Minimes, 1000 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 478 354 213
E-mail: info@sorrywerecoed.com
Web: www.sorrywerecoed.com

Until May 10
Matt Kleberg
June 5 – July 5
Vera Klimentyeva
June 5 – July 5
Perrine Boudy

GALERIE TEMPLON

rue Veydt 13, 1060 Bruxelles
Tel: +32 2 537 13 17
E-mail: brussels@templon.com
Web: www.templon.com

Until June 7
Nazanin Pouyandeh: Sous l'étoffe du monde
May 9–13
TEFAF New York
June 19–22
Art Basel

NETHERLANDS

ANDRIESSE EYCK GALERIE

Leliegracht 47, 1016 GT Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 623 62 37
E-mail: info@andriesse-eyck.com
Web: www.andriesse-eyck.com

May 22 – July 5 Mik Bakker

EYE FILM MUSEUM

IJpromenade 1, 1031 KT Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 589 14 00
E-mail: info@eyefilm.nl
Web: www.eyefilm.nl

Until June 1 Nuri Bilge Ceylan: Inner Landscapes

GALERIE RON MANDOS

Prinsengracht 282, 1016 HJ Amsterdam
Tel: +31 20 320 70 36
E-mail: mail@ronmandos.nl
Web: www.ronmandos.nl

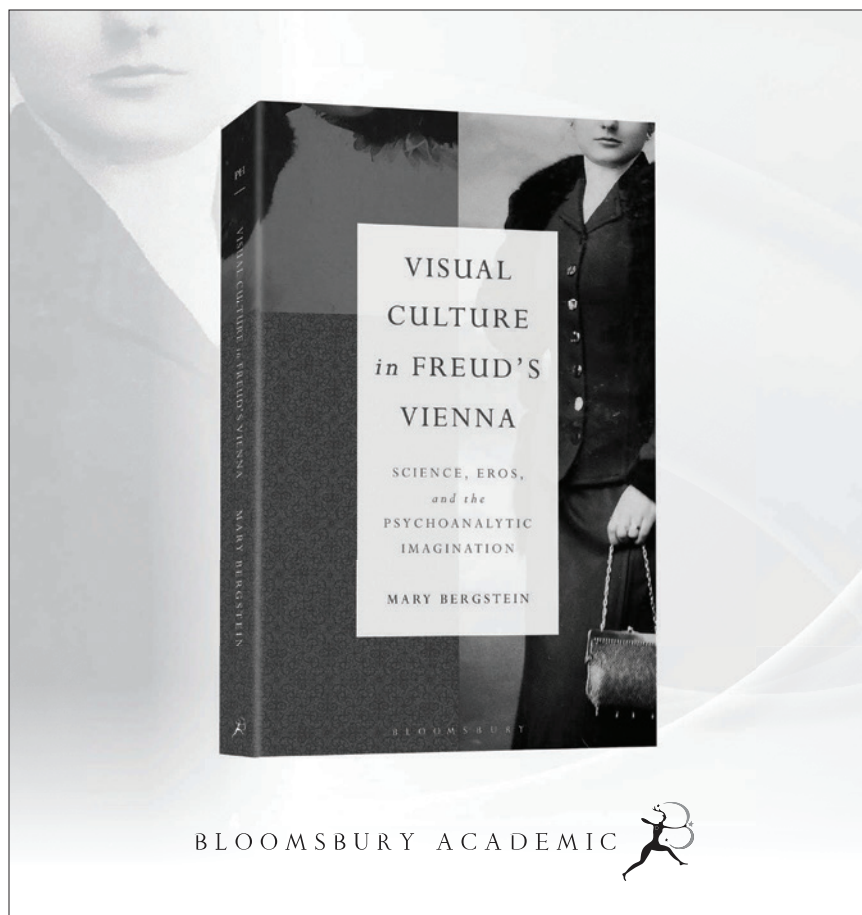
Until May 11 Koen van den Broek: Gravity
Until May 11 Anselm Reyle: Babylon Fading
May 20–25 Amsterdam Art Week
May 22 – July 13 Anthony Goicolea
May 22 – July 13 Shen Wei

LUXEMBOURG

NOSBAUM REDING GALLERY

rue Wittheim 2 + 4, L-2733 Luxembourg
Tel: +35 2 281 12 51
E-mail: reding@nosbaumreding.com
Web: www.nosbaumreding.com

May 8 – June 7 Eric Schumacher (Projects)
May 8 – June 21 Atelier Van Lieshout



Alexander Gray Associates

New York
384 Broadway
New York NY 10013

Tel: +1 212 399 2636
www.alexandergray.com

2025
MFA THESIS SHOW
MAY 6-18

CURATOR
KIMBERLI MEYER

THROUGH SHIFTING LENSES

RECEPTION: FRIDAY, MAY 16 FROM 5-8PM

TUFTS UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES
40 TALBOT AVE, MEDFORD, MA 02155

SMFA.TUFTS.EDU/MFA-THESIS

SMFA Tufts University
Art Galleries

GALERIE SHIBUMI

SOFT LANDING

**ELIZA AXELSON-CHIDSEY
JESS FÜGLER
KATHARINE.NF**

Opening Reception:
Saturday, May 3: 5 - 7 PM
On View: May 3 - May 31, 2025
13 Market Street, Chinatown

SEOUL

ARARIO GALLERY

85 Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03058
Tel: 82 2 541 5701 Hours: Tues. – Sat. 11–6
43 Mannam-ro, Dongnam-gu, Cheonan-si,
Chungcheongnam-do, Korea 31120
Tel: 82 41 551 5100 Hours: Mon. – Sun. 11–7
E-mail: info@arariogallery.com Web: arariogallery.com
Instagram: @arariogallery_official Facebook: arariogallery
WeChat ID: ararioshanghai

Until June 7 Koo Jiyeon: Silver (Seoul)
Until June 7 Yohan Han (Seoul)
Until March 22, 2026 Unbo Kim Ki Chang (Cheonan)

BARAKAT CONTEMPORARY

58-4 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03049
Tel: 82 2 730 1949 E-mail: info@barakat.kr Web: barakatcontemporary.com
Instagram: @barakat_contemporary Hours: Tues. – Sun. 10–6

May 14 – July 13 Ulla von Brandenburg: Shadows under water

GALLERY BATON

116 Dokseodang-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04420
Tel: 82 2 597 5701 E-mail: info@gallerybaton.com Web: gallerybaton.com
Instagram: @gallerybaton Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 10 Estuary_Between Tides: Jonathan Monk, Noemie
Goudal, Rinus Van de Velde, Roh Choong Hyun, Andi Fischer,
and Ludovic Nkoth
May 22 – June 28 Tatsuo Miyajima

GALLERY HYUNDAI

14 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03062
Tel: 82 2 2287 3500 Fax: 82 2 2287 3580
8 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03062
Tel: 82 2 2287 3591 Fax: 82 2 2287 3590
E-mail: mail@galleryhyundai.com Web: galleryhyundai.com
Instagram: @galleryhyundai Hours: Tues. – Sun. 10–6

Until May 15 55 YEARS: A Legacy of Modern and Contemporary
Korean Art, Part I
May 22 – June 29 55 YEARS: A Legacy of Modern and
Contemporary Korean Art, Part II

KUKJE GALLERY

54 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03053
Tel: 82 2 735 8449 Fax: 82 2 733 4879
Hours: Mon. – Sat. 10–6, Sun. and holidays 10–5
F1963, 20 Gurak-ro, 123 Beon-gil, Suyeong-gu, Busan 48212
Tel: 82 5 1785 2239 Hours: Tues. – Sun. 10–6
E-mail: kukje@kukjegallery.com Web: kukjegallery.com
Instagram: @kukjegallery

Until May 11 Ha Chong-Hyun (Seoul)
Until May 11 Jae-Eun Choi: Nature Rules (Seoul)

LEEAHN GALLERY

9 Jahamun-ro 12-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03043
Tel: 82 2 730 2243 Fax: 82 2 512 2243
184-31 Icheon-ro, Jung-gu, Daegu, 41956
Tel: 82 53 424 2203 Fax: 82 53 426 2203
E-mail: info@leeahngallery.com Web: leeahngallery.com
Instagram: @leeahngallery Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10–6

May 7 – June 28 Anna Park (Daegu)
May 15 – June 28 Yoon Jongsuk: Bom (Seoul)

LEHMANN MAUPIN

213 Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04349
Tel: 82 2 725 0094 Fax: 82 2 725 0095
E-mail: seoul@lehmannmaupin.com Web: lehmannmaupin.com
Instagram: @lehmannmaupin Hours: Tues. – Sat. 11–7

Until May 31 Hernan Bas: The space between
needful & needless

ONE AND J. GALLERY

26, Apgujeong-ro 60-gil, Gangnam-gu, Seoul 06014
Tel: 82 2 745 1644 Fax: 82 2 745 1642 E-mail: info@oneandj.com
Web: oneandj.com Instagram & Facebook: @oneandjgallery
Twitter: @oneandj_gallery Hours: Tues. – Sat. 11–6

Please contact gallery for information.

PACE

267, Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04348
Tel: 82 2 790 9388 E-mail: seoul@pacegallery.com
Web: www.pacegallery.com Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 17 Nigel Cooke: Sea Mirror
Until May 17 Louise Nevelson: The Fourth Dimension

THE PAGE GALLERY

32-14 Seoulsup 2-gil, Seongdong-gu, Seoul 04769
Tel: 82 2 3447 0049 Fax: 82 2 3447 0050
E-mail: info@thepage-gallery.com Web: thepage-gallery.com
Instagram: @thepage_gallery Hours: Tues. – Sun. 10:30–6

Until May 2 To Bloom
May 22 – July 26 Echoes of Gaia

THADDAEUS ROPAC

1–2F, 122-1 Dokseodang-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04420
Tel: 82 2 6949 1760 E-mail: seoul@ropac.net Web: ropac.net
Instagram: @thaddaeusropac Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 31 Tom Sachs
June 6 – August 2 Lee Kang-So

WHITE CUBE SEOUL

6 Dosan-daero 45-gil, Gangnam-gu, Seoul 06021
Tel: 82 2 6438 9093 Web: whitecube.com
E-mail: enquiries@whitecube.com
Instagram: @whitecube Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until June 21 Inside the White Cube: Alex Carver



BOTTINO

takeout | delivery | garden 246 10th Ave. bottinonyc.com

ALMINE RECH | NEW YORK, TRIBECA

361 Broadway
alminerech.com contact.newyork@alminerech.com 212 804 8496

May 9 – June 14 Heinz Mack

ANDREW KREPS

22 Cortlandt Alley 394 Broadway 55 Walker Street
andrewkreps.com contact@andrewkreps.com 212 741 8849

Please contact gallery for information.

ANONYMOUS GALLERY

136 Baxter Street
anonymousgallery.com hello@anonymousgallery.com 646 478 7112

Please contact gallery for information.

BORTOLAMI

39 Walker Street
bortolamigallery.com info@bortolamigallery.com 212 727 2050

May 7 – May 31 Marina Rheingantz
Until May 31 Barbana Bojadzi, Jake Grewal, and Cole Lu

BROADWAY

375 Broadway
broadwaygallery.nyc info@broadwaygallery.nyc 212 226 4001

Until May 24 Caitlin Lonegan
May 29 – June 21 Mickey Lee

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

38 Walker Street, Ground Floor
derekeller.com info@derekeller.com 212 206 6411

Until May 24 Scott Covert: ANOTHER DEAD SUPREME (North Room)
Until May 24 Ellen Lesperance: I Am Woman Inflicted With the
Burden of Bearing Mankind
May 30 – July 11 Iva Gueorguieva
May 30 – July 11 Robert Lostutter (North Room)

DIMIN

406 Broadway, 2nd Floor
dimin.nyc gallery@dimin.nyc 646 398 8624

Until May 31 Elena Redmond: Sitting Ducks
June 6 – July 3 Michelle Im

FRIEDRICHS PONTONE

273 Church Street
friedrichspontone.com enquiries@friedrichspontone.com 212 918 1358

Until May 3 Claudia Doring Baez: My Brother's Mind
Until May 3 Kristi Kongi: Twilight in the Garden
May 9–31 The Fight Between Carnival and Lent

GEORGE ADAMS GALLERY

38 Walker Street, Lower Level
georgeadamsgallery.com info@georgeadamsgallery.com 212 564 8480

Until May 24 Cate White

GRIMM

54 White Street
grimmgallery.com info@grimmgallery.com 212 280 3877

Until May 3 Caroline Walker: The Holiday Park
May 9 – June 21 Louise Giovanelli

HESSE FLATOW

77 Franklin Street
hesseflatow.com info@hesseflatow.com 646 892 3032

May 2 – June 7 Sarah Blaustein
May 2 – June 7 Jonathan Ryan

JAMES COHAN

48 Walker Street 52 Walker Street, 2nd Floor
jamescohan.com info@jamescohan.com 212 714 9500

Until May 10 Kennedy Yanko: Epithets
Until May 10 Claudia Alarcón and Silät
May 16 – July 25 Toshiko Takaezu: Bronzes
May 16 – July 25 All About 25: 25th Anniversary Show

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

58 White Street
janelombardgallery.com info@janelombardgallery.com 212 967 8040

May 2 – June 21 Jane Bustin: Pirelli, let me count the ways [Part II]
May 2 – June 21 Jeff Wallace: JLG Projects – To From
June 27 – August 8 Soft Structures: Elodie Blanchard, Melissa
Dadourian, Crystal Gregory, Jen P. Harris, Rachel B. Hayes, Woomin
Kim, Sophia Narrett, Zipporah Camille Thompson, and Hanna
Washburn; curated by Jen Wroblewski

KAUFMANN REPETTO

55 Walker Street
kaufmannrepetto.com info@kaufmannrepetto.com 917 388 3580

Until May 10 Kresiah Mukwazhi
May 16 – June 21 Corita Kent

MARC STRAUS

57 Walker Street
marcstraus.com info@marcstraus.com 212 837 1363

May 9 – June 22 Renée Stout

MARGOT SAMEL

295 Church Street
margotsamel.com info@margotsamel.com 212 597 2747

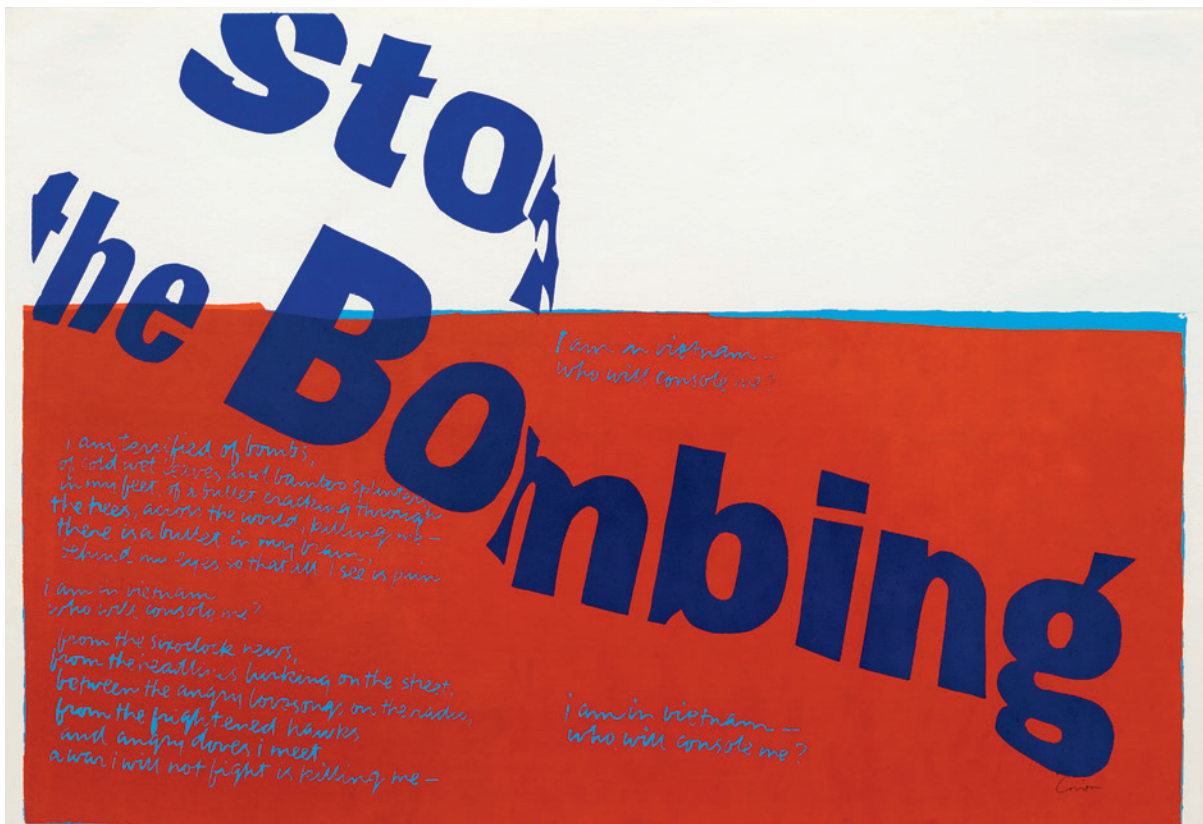
Until May 31 Olivia Jia: Mirror Stage
June 6 – July 7 Carolina Fusilier

MENDES WOOD DM | NEW YORK

47 Walker Street
mendeswooddm.com newyork@mendeswooddm.com 212 220 9943

May 2 – June 14 Rosana Paulino

TRIBECA NYC



Corita Kent, *stop the bombing*, 1967, screen print, 18 1/4 × 26". Photo: Andrea Rosseti. Courtesy the Corita Art Center, Los Angeles; kaufmann repetto, Milan/New York; and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York.

OFF PARADISE

120 Walker Street
offparadise.com paradise@offparadise.com 212 388 9010

Until May 17 Ross Knight: Continuous Squeeze

P-P-O-W

392 Broadway 390 Broadway, 2nd Floor
ppowgallery.com info@ppowgallery.com 212 647 1044

Until May 10 Side Lined: Keltie Ferris, Brenda Goodman, Stephen Mueller,
Erika Rane, Julia Rommel, Sojourner Truth Parsons, and Marilyn Lerner
Until May 31 Manuel Pardo
May 16 – June 21 Jovencio de la Paz

SCHOELKOPF

390 Broadway, 3rd Floor
schoelkopfgallery.com info@schoelkopfgallery.com 212 879 8815

May 9 – June 28 Mary Abbott: To Draw Imagination

SHRINE

368 Broadway
shrine.nyc info@shrine.nyc 212 381 1395

Until May 3 Ava McDonough: Revery
Until May 3 Michael Mangino: Bloom World Wonderful Green
Roses For Me Myself
May 9 – June 21 Elise Ferguson: Threshold
May 9 – June 21 Dena Novak: Deconstructing Domesticity

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

54 Franklin Street
stephenfriedman.com infonyc@stephenfriedman.com 212 991 9099

Until May 21 Queer Love

STORAGE

52 Walker Street, 4th Floor
storageartgallery.com info@storageartgallery.com 917 450 8366

Until May 3 Eden Seifu and Carolyn Oberst: A New Sacred
May 9 – June 21 Jacqueline Gourevitch: Cloud Paintings

SUPERHOUSE

120 Walker Street, 6R
superhouse.us hello@superhouse.us

Please contact gallery for information.

TIMOTHY TAYLOR

74 Leonard Street
timothytaylor.com info@timothytaylor.com 212 256 1669

Until May 3 Michel Perez Pollo: Bolero
May 8 – June 21 Antonia Showering

INDIA

MUMBAI

CHATTERJEE & LAL

01/18, Kamal Mansion, 1st Floor
Arthur Bunder Road,
Colaba, Mumbai 400 005
Tel: +91 98202 98246
E-mail: info@chatterjeeandlal.com
Web: www.chatterjeeandlal.com
Instagram: @chatterjeeandlal

Please contact gallery for information.

CHEMOULD PRESCOTT ROAD

Queens Mansion, 3rd Floor,
G. Talwatkar Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400 001
Chemould CoLab: Sugra Manzil, 2nd Floor
BEST Marg, Colaba, Mumbai 400-039
Tel: +91 22220 00211
E-mail: gallerychemould@gmail.com
admin@gallerychemould.com
Web: www.gallerychemould.com
Instagram: @chemouldprescottroad,
@chemouldCoLAB

Please contact gallery for information.

DR. BHAI DAJI LAD MUSEUM

Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan and Zoo
(Rani Baug), 91 A Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Rd,
Byculla East, Mumbai 400 027
Tel: +91 022 23741234
E-mail: enquiry@bdlmuseum.org
Web: www.bdlmuseum.org
Instagram: @bdlmuseum

Until August 17

Eckart Muthesius and Manik Bagh:
Pioneering Modernism in India; curated
by Raffael Dedo Gadebusch, in collaboration
with Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin,
and the German Embassy

EXPERIMENTER

Sunny House, 1st Floor
16/18 Merewether Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 001
E-mail: admin@experimenter.in
Web: www.experimenter.in
Instagram: @experimenterkol
Facebook, Vimeo: @experimentergallery
YouTube: @experimenterlearningprogra404

May 8 – June 30

Shikh Sabbir Alam: বনমানুষ / Bon-Manush

JHAVERI CONTEMPORARY

Devidas Mansion, 3rd Floor
4 Mereweather Road, Colaba,
Mumbai 400 001
Tel: +91 22 2202 1051
E-mail: info@jhavericontemporary.com
Web: www.jhavericontemporary.com

May 22 – June 8

Lubna Chowdhary, Muhanned Cader, and Seher
Shah (Frieze No. 9 Cork Street, London)

GALERIE ISA

Kamani Chambers, Ground Floor
Ramji Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate,
Mumbai 400 038
Tel: +91 98 2004 8002
E-mail: info@galerieisa.com
Web: www.galerieisa.com

May 8 – June 23

Group Show: GR Iranna, Ross Taylor, and
Saif Azzuz

NATURE MORTE

Dhanraj Mahal, Block A, Third Floor,
Apollo Bandar, Colaba, Mumbai 400 001
E-mail: info@naturemorte.com
Web: www.naturemorte.com
Instagram: @naturemorte_india
X: @NatureMorte
Facebook: Nature Morte

Until May 31

Vibha Galhotra

PROJECT 88

BMP Building, Ground Floor
N.A. Sawant Marg,
Colaba, Mumbai 400 005
Tel: +91 22 2281 0099, +91 22 3508 6204
E-mail: contact@project88.in
Web: www.project88.in
Instagram: @project88mumbai

Please contact gallery for information.

TARQ

KK (Navsari) Chambers,
Ground Floor, 39 AK Nayak Marg,
Fort, Mumbai 400 001
Tel: +91 22 6615 0424
E-mail: info@tarq.in
Web: www.tarq.in
Instagram: @tarqmumbai

Until May 31

Pillars of Fruit and Bone: Rithika Merchant

June 12 – July 19

Group Show: The Artist As

ALIBAUG

THE GUILD

1028, Ranjanpada (next to Sai Temple),
Mandwa Alibaug Road,
Alibaug 402 201
Tel: +91 22 2287 5839 / 2288 0195
E-mail: theguildart@gmail.com
Web: www.guildindia.com
Instagram: @theguildartgallery

Please contact gallery for information.

DELHI

AKAR PRAKAR

D-43, Defence Colony, 1st Floor
New Delhi 110 024
Tel: +91 11 4131 5348
E-mail: info@akarprakar.com
Web: www.akarprakar.com

Please contact gallery for information.

EXHIBIT 320

F-320, Lado Sarai,
New Delhi 110 030
Tel: +91 11 4613 0637
E-mail: exhibit320@gmail.com
Web: www.exhibit320.com

Please contact gallery for information.

GALLERY SPACE

16, Community Centre
New Friends Colony,
New Delhi 110 025
Tel: +91 11 2632 6267 / 2692 2947
E-mail: art@galleryspace.com
Web: www.galleryspace.com
Instagram: @galleryspace
Facebook: GallerySpace

Until May 12
Rashmimala

KIRAN NADAR MUSEUM OF ART

145, DLF South Court Mall, Saket,
New Delhi 110 017
Plot 3-A, Sec 126, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201 303
Tel: +91 11 4916 0000
E-mail: knma@hcl.com
Web: www.knma.in
Facebook, YouTube: KiranNadarMuseumOfArt
Instagram: @knmaindia
Twitter: @KNMAIndia

Until June 30
Of Worlds Within Worlds: Gulammohammed
Sheikh, A Retrospective (Saket)

NATURE MORTE

Main Gallery: The Dhan Mill, 100 Feet Road,
Chhatarpur, New Delhi 110 074
Gallery 2 and Offices: 7, Poorvi Marg,
Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110 057
E-mail: info@naturemorte.com
Web: www.naturemorte.com
Instagram: @naturemorte_india
X: @NatureMorte
Facebook: Nature Morte

May 9 – June 15
Group Show (Dhan Mill)

KOLKATA

AKAR PRAKAR

P-238, Hindustan Park,
Kolkata 700 029
Tel: +91 33 2464 2617
E-mail: info@akarprakar.com
Web: www.akarprakar.com
Instagram: @akar.prakar
Facebook: @akarprakarccu
YouTube: @akarprakar

Please contact gallery for information.

EMAMI ART

777, Anandapur, E.M. Bypass,
Kolkata 700 107
Tel: +91 33 6623 2300
E-mail: contact@emamiart.com
Web: www.emamiart.com
Instagram: @Emamiart

Until May 5
One Hundred Years and Counting:
Re-Scripting KG Subramanian, in
collaboration with Seagull and
Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath
Until June 21
The Geometry of Ordinary Lives:
Prasanta Sahu
Until June 21
Group Show

EXPERIMENTER

2/1, Hindustan Road,
Kolkata 700 029
45, Ballygunge Place,
Kolkata 700 019
Tel: +91 33 4001 2289
E-mail: admin@experimenter.in
Web: www.experimenter.in
Instagram: @experimenterkol
Facebook, Vimeo: @experimentergallery
YouTube: @experimenterlearningprogra404

Until June 14
Artists for Artists: Aishwarya Arumbakkam,
Rai, Rupali Patil, and Sathish Kumar

MEXICO



Andrea Galvani, *The Void Migrates to the Surface [Malachite]*, 2025, HD video (color, 4 minutes 20 seconds), monitor, limestone, granite, marble, quartz, pyrite, resin, metal plate, 61 × 54 3/8 × 37". Courtesy Curro Gallery, Guadalajara.

GUADALAJARA

CURRO

Andrés Terán 726, Colonia Santa Teresita, 44600, Guadalajara
galeriacurro.com info@galeriacurro.com
+52 33 1516 3714 Mon - Fri 10-6

Until May

Andrea Galvani: The Void Migrates to the Surface

TRAVESÍA CUATRO

Avenida de la Paz 2207, Colonia Americana, 44140, Guadalajara
travesiacuatro.com guadalajara@travesiacuatro.com
+52 33 3615 2694 Tue - Fri 10-6, Sat 12-3

Until May 15

Mariela Scafati: Pintura Pintura Pintura

Until May 15

Romeo Gómez López: Life on Mars (Project Room)

MEXICO CITY

ARRÓNIZ

Tabasco 198, PB, Colonia Roma, 06700, Mexico City
arroniz-arte.com info@arroniz-arte.com
+52 55 55 11 79 65 Mon - Fri 10-7, Sat 11-2:30

May 8 - June 21

Emilio Chapela

May 8 - June 21

Mark Powell

May 8 - June 21

Perla Krauze

GALERÍA HILARIO GALGUERA

Francisco Pimentel 3, Colonia San Rafael, 06470, Mexico City
Aguascalientes 158, Colonia Hipódromo Condesa, 06100, Mexico City
galeriahilariogalguera.com info@galeriahilariogalguera.com
+52 55 4145 0713 Tue - Fri 11-5, Sat 11-2

Please contact gallery for information.

GALERÍA RGR

Gral. Antonio León 48, Colonia San Miguel Chapultepec, 11850, Mexico City
rgrart.com galeria@rgrart.com
+52 1 55 8434 7759 Mon - Thu 10:30-6:30, Fri - Sat 10:30-4:30

Until May 30

Hilma's Ghost

KÖNIG GALERIE

Calle Yautepec 111, Colonia Condesa, Cuauhtémoc, 06140, Mexico City
koeniggalerie.com mexicocity@koeniggalerie.com
+52 55 40 44 77 33
Tue - Fri 12-6, Sat 12-4, and by appointment

Until May 29

Fernanda Snowdon and Ramona Rocha: Luz Oscura

LABOR

Gral. F. Ramírez 5, Daniel Garza, Miguel Hidalgo, 11830, Mexico City
labor.org.mx info@labor.org.mx
+52 55 6304 8755 Mon - Thu 11-6, Fri - Sat 11-3

Until May 9
Jerónimo Elespe
May 30
Pablo Vargas Lugo

MARIANE IBRAHIM

Río Pánuco 36, Colonia Renacimiento, Cuauhtémoc, 06500, Mexico City
marianeibrahim.com mexicodf@marianeibrahim.com
+52 55 2580 9822 Tue - Fri 11-6, Sat 11-4

Until May 17
Salah Elmur: The Land of the Sun

PROYECTOS MONCLOVA

Lamartine 415, Polanco, Polanco V Secc, Miguel Hidalgo, 11560, Mexico City
proyectosmonclova.com info@proyectosmonclova.com
+52 55 5525 9715 Mon - Fri 10-6, Sat 11-4

May 24 - August 23
Ángela Gurría and Helen Escobedo (Main Space and First Floor)

SAENGER GALERÍA

Manuel Dublán 33, 4to piso, Tacubaya, Miguel Hidalgo, 11870, Mexico City
saengergaleria.com info@saengergaleria.com
+52 55 5516 6941 Tue - Fri 11-7, Sat 11-4

Until May 17
Javier Peláez, Iván Trueta, and Pablo Rasgado (Casa Limantour)
Until June
Alfredo Gallegos Mena: Estar na corda bamba (Error inestable)
(Main Room)
Until June
Joshua Jobb: Ludus Naturae (Project Room)
May 8 - 11
NADA New York: Robert Janitz, Cecilia Barreto, and Yoab Vera

SALÓN SILICÓN

Tehuantepec 223, Roma Sur, Cuauhtémoc, 06760, Mexico City
salonsilicon.com info@salonsilicon.com
+52 46 21 026233 Tue - Fri 12-6, Sat 12-3

Until May 9
C'est moi, c'est nous by Salón Silicón and Zemmoa

TRAVESÍA CUATRO

Valladolid 35, Colonia Roma Norte, Cuauhtémoc, 06700, Mexico City
travesiacuatro.com cdmx@travesiacuatro.com
+52 55 5206 3617 Tue - Thu 10-6, Fri 10-4, Sat 11-3

May 9
Virginia Chihota and Claudia Pagès



Kiyoshi Nakagami, *Untitled*, 2024, acrylic, sumi ink, and mica on canvas, 76⅞ × 51¼".
Courtesy Colector, Monterrey.

MONTERREY

COLECTOR

Lázaro Garza Ayala Pte 436, Casco Urbano, 66230, SPGG, Monterrey
colector.gallery info@colector.gallery
+52 81 1769 8300 Tue - Fri 10-6

Until May
Kiyoshi Nakagami: La Poética de la Sombra

PHOTOGRAPHY

DEBORAH BELL PHOTOGRAPHS

526 West 26th Street, Room 411, New York, NY 10001

212 249 9400

info@deborahbellphotographs.com

www.deborahbellphotographs.com

Thurs. – Sat. 11–5, and by appointment

Until May 10

Louis Faurer / Helen Levitt: New York City, 1938–1988

FRAENKEL GALLERY

49 Geary Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94108

415 981 2661

mail@fraenkelgallery.com

www.fraenkelgallery.com

Tues. – Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. 11–5, and by appointment

Until May 23

Alec Soth: Advice for Young Artists

May 29 – August 9

Richard Learoyd and Frances Palmer

LARGE GLASS

392 Caledonian Road, London, N1 1DN, England

44 207 609 9345

info@largeglass.co.uk

www.largeglass.co.uk

Wed. – Sat. 11–6, and by appointment

Until May 24

Mario Cresci: Geometries / Epiphanies,

curated by Luca Fiore

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY (MOCP)

Columbia College Chicago

600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

312 663 5554

mocp@colum.edu

www.mocp.org

Mon. – Sat. 10–5, Thurs. 10–8

May 30 – August 16

Collaboration: A Potential History of Photography in

Dialogue with the MoCP Collection; curated by Wendy

Ewald, Susan Meiselas, Kristin Taylor, and Laura Wexler

STALEY-WISE GALLERY

100 Crosby Street, Suite 305, New York, NY 10012

212 966 6223

photo@staleywise.com

www.staleywise.com

Tues. – Sat. 11–5

May 15 – August 2

Elliott Erwitt: Last Laughs



Louis Faurer, *Accident, New York, NY, 1952*, gelatin silver print, 11 × 14". © The Estate of Louis Faurer. Courtesy Deborah Bell Photographs, New York.

STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

1356 Dundas Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M6J 1Y2, Canada
 416 504 0575
info@bulgergallery.com
www.bulgergallery.com
 Tues. – Sat. 11–6

May 10 – July 5
 Christina Leslie: Pinhole Portraits and Places

YANCEY RICHARDSON GALLERY

525 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011
 646 230 9610
info@yanceyrichardson.com
www.yanceyrichardson.com
 Mon. – Fri. 10–6

Until May 23
 Zanele Muholi: Sawubona

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL

Lion Arts Centre, North Terrace, Kaurua Yarta, Adelaide 5000
Tel: 61 8 8211 7505
E-mail: admin@ace.gallery
Web: www.ace.gallery

May 3 – June 28 Push / Pull: Antony Abbraciavento, Troy-Anthony Baylis, Alycia Bennett, Matt Huppatz & Adam Birchmore (Adam & Steve), Jingwei Bu, Patrick William Carter, Luna Chan, Allison Chhorn, Sione Teumohenga, Students from the South Australian School and Services for Visual Impairment, VNS Matrix, and others

ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY

185 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, VIC 3000
Tel: 61 3 9654 6131
E-mail: mail@annaschwartzgallery.com
Web: www.annaschwartzgallery.com

Until June 7 David Noonan: Eight Line Poem

FINE ARTS, SYDNEY

23 Hampden Street, Paddington, Sydney, NSW 2021
Tel: 61 2 9361 6200
E-mail: email@finearts.sydney
Web: www.finearts.sydney

Until May 31 Francis Upritchard

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY

21-31 High Street, Preston South, Melbourne, VIC 3072
Tel: 61 3 9480 0068
E-mail: info@gertrude.org.au
Web: www.gertrude.org.au

Until June 8 1964, 1969, 1977, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2025;
curated by Helen Hughes and Spiros Panigirakis
June 21 – August 10 Of Stadiums and Construction Sites (Ne change rien pour que tout soit different), curated by Lisa Radford

GERTRUDE GLASSHOUSE

44 Glasshouse Road, Collingwood, Melbourne, VIC 3066
Tel: 61 3 9480 0068
E-mail: info@gertrude.org.au
Web: www.gertrude.org.au

Until May 31 Chunxiao Qu
Until December 13 Tara Denny
June 6 – July 12 Arini Byng

ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY

8 Soudan Lane, Paddington, Sydney, NSW 2021
Tel: 61 2 9331 1919
E-mail: oxley9@roslynoxley9.com.au
Web: www.roslynoxley9.com.au

Please contact gallery for information.

STATION

9 Ellis Street, South Yarra, Melbourne, VIC 3141
Tel: 61 3 9826 2470
91 Campbell Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, 2010
Tel: 61 2 9055 4688
E-mail: post@stationgallery.com
Web: www.stationgallery.com

Please contact gallery for information.

WHITE RABBIT GALLERY

30 Balfour Street, Chippendale, NSW 2008
Tel: 61 2 8399 2867
E-mail: info@whiterabbitcollection.org
Web: www.whiterabbitcollection.org

Until May 18 Group Show: XSWL

NEW ZEALAND

TE PĀTAKA TOI ADAM ART GALLERY

Gate 3, Kelburn Parade, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington 6140
Tel: 64 4 463 5229
E-mail: adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz
Web: www.adamartgallery.nz

Until June 15 A Different Light: First Photographs of Aotearoa
Until June 15 Adrienne Martyn and Sam Norton: Things are, they do not happen
Until June 15 Sung Hwan Bobby Park

DUNEDIN PUBLIC ART GALLERY

30 The Octagon, Dunedin 9016
Tel: 64 3 474 3240
E-mail: dpagmail@dcc.govt.nz
Web: www.dunedin.art.museum

Until July 6 THIS IS NOM*d
Until October 31 Huikaau – Where Currents Meet: Ross Hemera, Rita Angus, Zanolu Machiavelli, Ralph Hotere, Peter Robinson, Ayesha Green, Milan Mrkusich, and Colin McCahon
Until February 15, 2026 Mataaho Collective: Hautāmiro
May 31 – October 12 Kāi Tahu and Anne Noble:
Unutai e! Unutai e!

MICHAEL LETT

312 Karangahape Road, Newton, Auckland 1010
Tel: 64 9 309 7848
E-mail: contact@michaellett.com
Web: www.michaellett.com

Until May 31 Judy Millar & Kate Newby

Art|Basel Basel

powering the world of art

Art is *potential*

June 19–22, 2025



Judy Chicago, *Purple Atmosphere*, 1969. © Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo courtesy of Thorough the Flower Archives; the artist; Jessica Silverman Gallery; and Jeffrey Datch.

ATLANTA

SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film

1600 Peachtree St NW, Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: 404 253 3132
Web: www.scadfash.org
Instagram: [@scadfash](https://www.instagram.com/scadfash)

Until August 31 Jeanne Lanvin: Haute Couture Heritage
Until September 7 Campbell Addy: The Stillness of Elegance

BALTIMORE

The Walters Art Museum

600 N. Charles St. Baltimore, MD 21201
Tel: 410 547 9000
Web: www.thewalters.org

Until August 5 If Books Could Kill

BUFFALO

Buffalo AKG Art Museum

1285 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222
Tel: 716 882 8700
Web: www.buffaloakg.org
Instagram: [@buffaloakgartmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/buffaloakgartmuseum)

Until May 12 That Which Binds Us
Until June 9 Hi-Vis
Until June 30 Steina: Playback

CAMBRIDGE

MIT List Visual Arts Center

20 Ames St, Cambridge, MA 02139
Tel: 617 253 4680
Web: www.listart.mit.edu

Until May 18 Kite: List Projects 31
Until July 27 Pedro Gómez-Egaña: The Great Learning
June 4 – August 31 Elif Saydam: List Projects 32

CHICAGO

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA Chicago)

220 E Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL 60611
Tel: 312 280 2660
Web: www.mcachicago.org

Until May 11 Arthur Jafa: Works from the MCA Collection
Until July 6 Descending The Staircase
Until July 6 Dieter Roth and Björn Roth: Balabild 5
Until September 14 Pipilotti Rist: Supersubjektiv
Until October 19 Wafaa Bilal: Indulge Me
Until March 29, 2026 Atrium Project: Edie Fake
May 3 – August 31 Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom

CLEVELAND

Museum of Contemporary Art (moCa) Cleveland

11400 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44106
Tel: 216 421 8671
Web: www.moCacleveland.org

Please contact gallery for information.

COLD SPRING

Magazzino Italian Art Foundation

2700 Route 9, Cold Spring, NY 10516
Tel: 845 666 7202
Web: www.magazzino.art

Ongoing Arte Povera

FORT WORTH

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

3200 Darnell St, Fort Worth, TX 76107
Tel: 817 738 9215
Web: www.themodern.org

Until July 27 Feeling Color: Aubrey Williams and Frank Bowling
Until September 7 Alex Da Corte: The Whale

HOUSTON

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

5216 Montrose Blvd, Houston, TX 77006
Tel: 713 284 8250
Web: www.camh.org

Please contact gallery for information.

MANCHESTER

Currier Museum of Art

150 Ash St, Manchester, NH 03104
Tel: 603 669 6144
Web: www.currier.org
Instagram: [@curriermuseum](https://www.instagram.com/curriermuseum)

Until June 5 Ann Agee: Madonna of the Girl Child Series
Until September 1 Nicolas Party and Surrealism: An Artist’s Take on the Movement

MIAMI

The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse

591 NW 27th St, Miami, FL 33127
Tel: 305 576 1051
Web: www.margulieswarehouse.com

The Margulies Collection is reopening with new exhibitions in October.

MINNEAPOLIS

Walker Art Center

725 Vineland Pl, Minneapolis, MN 55403
Tel: 612 375 7600
Web: www.walkerart.org

Until May 25 Collection in Focus: Banu Cennetoğlu
Until July 6 Pan Daijing: Sudden Places
Until August 24 Kandis Williams: A Surface
Until September 7 Ways of Knowing

Contemporary Art in U.S. Museums

NASHVILLE

Frist Art Museum

919 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203
Tel: 615 244 3340
Web: www.fristartmuseum.org

Until May 4 Farm to Table – Art, Food, and Identity in the Age of Impressionism: Rosa Bonheur, Gustave Courbet, Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet, and Camille Pissarro

Until May 4 M. Florine Démosthène and Didier William: What the Body Carries

Until May 4 Tennessee Harvest – 1870s–1920s: Lloyd Branson, George Chambers, Gilbert Gaul, Cornelius Hankins, Willie Betty Newman, and Catherine Wiley

Until June 1 David C. Driskell & Friends: Creativity, Collaboration, and Friendship

Until June 1 Kindred Spirits: Intergenerational Forms of Expression, 1966–1999

NEW HAVEN

Yale Center for British Art

1080 Chapel St, New Haven, CT 06520
Tel: 203 432 2800
Web: britishart.yale.edu

Until July 27 J. M. W. Turner: Romance and Reality
Until August 10 Tracey Emin: I Loved You Until The Morning

OMAHA

Joslyn Art Museum

2200 Dodge St, Omaha, NE 68102
Tel: 402 342 3300
Web: www.joslyn.org

Until May 4 All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840–1955

Until May 4 Alec Soth: Reading Room

Until August 24 The Floating World and Beyond: 200 Years of Japanese Prints

PHILADELPHIA

Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania

118 South 36th St, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Web: www.icaphila.org
Instagram: @ICAPhiladelphia

Please contact museum for information.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Benjamin Franklin Pkwy & 26th St, Philadelphia, PA 19130
Tel: 215 763 8100
Web: www.philamuseum.org

Until May 26 Firing the Imagination: Japanese Influence on French Ceramics, 1860–1910

Until June 1 Mythical Creatures: China and the World

Until June 1 Christina Ramberg: A Retrospective

Until July 21 Wanda Gág: Art for Life’s Sake

Until September 1 Boom: Art and Design in the 1940s

RENO

Nevada Museum of Art

Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts, E. L. Wiegand Gallery
160 West Liberty St, Reno, NV 89501
Tel: 775 329 3333
Web: www.nevadaart.org

Until September 7 Lynn Hershman Leeson: Of Humans, Cyborgs, and AI

Until November 16 The Art of Judith Lowry

Until November 16 The Lowry & Croul Collection of Contemporary Native American Art

Until January 11, 2026 Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada

Until January 11, 2026 Anthony McCall: Swell

Until February 15, 2026 Dorothea Lange: Seeing People

May 3 – February 15, 2026 When Langston Hughes Came to Town

May 31 – November 9 Eternal Signs: Indigenous

Australian Art from the Kaplan & Levi Collection

ST. LOUIS

Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd, St Louis, MO 63108
Tel: 314 535 4660
Web: www.camstl.org
Instagram: @camstl

Until August 10 Make The River Present: Black Water Heritage Trail, Allena Brazier, Dail Chambers, Galen Gritts, Native Women’s Care Circle, and Monique Verdin

Until August 10 Like Water: Jamal Cyrus, Simone Fattal, Dionne Lee, Candice Lin, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, and Vivian Suter

SAVANNAH

SCAD Museum of Art

601 Turner Blvd, Savannah, GA 31401
Tel: 912 525 7191
Web: www.scadmoa.org
Instagram: @scadmoa

Until June 8 Vera & Friends: Artist Scarves by Vera Neumann and Massif Central

Until June 9 Sarah Crowner: Platform as Platform

Until June 22 Ken Gun Min: The vastness is bearable only through love

Until June 22 Jónsi: Vox

Until July 6 Raul De Lara: Raíces/Roots

Until July 6 Zanele Muholi

Until July 6 Christina Quarles: Far from Near

Until July 6 Samuel Ross: HEAVE

Until July 7 Diedrick Brackens: the shape of survival

WILMINGTON

Cameron Art Museum

3201 South 17th St, Wilmington, NC 28412
Tel: 910 395 5999
Web: www.cameronartmuseum.org
Instagram: @camartmuseum

Until September 7 We Belong Here: The Gutierrez Collection

Until October 5 The Game Changers: Diebenkorn, Frankenthaler, and Rauschenberg

June 7 – October 12 Group Show: Space Makers – Art and Disability in North Carolina

ENGLAND

ALMINE RECH

Grosvenor Hill, Broadbent House, London W1K 3JH
Tel: +44 20 7287 3644
E-mail: contact.london@alminerech.com
Web: www.alminerech.com
Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 24
Lou Zhenggang: Shizen
June 5 – July 26
Gregor Hildebrandt
June 5 – July 26
Serolod

CORVI-MORA

1A Kempford Road, (off Wincott Street) London SE11 4NU
Tel: +44 20 7840 9111
E-mail: info@corvi-mora.com
Web: www.corvi-mora.com
Tues. – Sat. 11–6

Until May 31
Brian Calvin: Wavelengths

GAGOSIAN

17–19 Davies Street, London W1K 3DE
Tel: +44 20 7493 3020
20 Grosvenor Hill, London W1K 3QD
Tel: +44 20 7495 1500
E-mail: london@gagosian.com
Web: www.gagosian.com
Mon. – Fri. 10–6

Until May 24
Amoako Boafo: I Do Not Come to You by Chance (Grosvenor Hill)

HAUSER & WIRTH LONDON

23 Savile Row, London W1S 2ET
Tel: +44 20 7287 2300
E-mail: london@hauserwirth.com
Web: www.hauserwirth.com
Tues. – Sat. 10–6

May 13 – August 2
Michaela Yearwood-Dan
June 5 – August 2
Paul McCarthy: Outside is Inside, Inside is Outside. God is Dog,
Dog is God

HAUSER & WIRTH SOMERSET
Durslade Farm, Dropping Lane, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0NL
Tel: +44 1749 814 060
E-mail: somerset@hauserwirth.com
Web: www.hauserwirth.com
Thurs. – Sun. 12–5

May 17 – February 1, 2026
Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely: Myths & Machines

LONDON MITHRAEUM BLOOMBERG SPACE

12 Walbrook, London EC4N 8AA
E-mail: info@londonmithraeum.com
Web: www.londonmithraeum.com
Tues. – Sat. 10–6, Sun. 12–5

Until July 5
Jonathan Baldock: 0.1%

MAUREEN PALEY

60 Three Colts Lane, London E2 6GQ
Tel: +44 20 7729 4112
E-mail: info@maureenpaley.com
Web: www.maureenpaley.com
Instagram: @maureenpaley
Wed. – Sat. 11–6

Until May 31
Kayode Ojo
June 5 – July 26
Maureen Gallace

STUDIO M
Rochelle School, 7 Playground Gardens, London E2 7FA
Wed. – Sat. 11–6

Until May 31
Chioma Ebinama
June 5 – July 26
Maureen Gallace

MORENA DI LUNA
3 Adelaide Crescent, Hove BN3 2JD
Sat. – Sun. 12–6

May 31 – September 7
Behrang Karimi

MOTHER’S TANKSTATION

58-64 Three Colts Lane, Bethnal Green, London E2 6 GP
Tel: +44 74 1258 1803
E-mail: gallery@motherstankstation.com
Web: www.motherstankstation.com
Thurs. – Sat. 12–6, and by appointment

May 15 – July 5
Stephen Wong Chun Hei: Between Sun and Moon

PACE GALLERY

5 Hanover Square, London W1S 1HQ
Tel: +44 20 3206 7600
E-mail: londoninfo@pacegallery.com
Web: www.pacegallery.com
Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 28
Michal Rovner
June 7 – August 8
Emily Kam Kngwarray

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

6 Heddon Street, London W1B 4BT
Tel: +44 20 7734 7760
E-mail: gallery@houldsworth.co.uk
Web: www.bouldsworth.co.uk
Tues. – Fri. 10–6, Sat. 11–6

May 2 – May 31
Katy Moran: Let’s get some AIR

SERPENTINE

Kensington Gardens, London W2 3XA
Tel: +44 20 7402 6075
E-mail: information@serpentinegalleries.org
Tues. – Sun. 10–6

Until July 27
Arpita Singh: Remembering (Serpentine North)
Until September 7
Giuseppe Penone: Thoughts in the Roots
(Serpentine South and The Royal Parks)
Until September 28
Esther Mahlangu: Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu
(Mural at Serpentine North)

SPROVIERI

23 Heddon Street, London W1B 4BQ
Tel: +44 20 7734 2066
E-mail: info@sprovieri.com
Web: www.sprovieri.com
Mon. – Fri. 10–6

Please contact gallery for information.

SPRÜTH MAGERS

7A Grafton Street, London W1S 4EJ
Tel: +44 20 7408 1613
E-mail: info@spruethmagers.com
Web: www.spruethmagers.com
Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until May 17
Songs Before Sunrise: Oliver Bak, Eugène Carrière, Guglielmo Castelli,
Enzo Cucchi, Enrico David, Leonor Fini, Anne Imhof, Alexej von Jawlensky,
Conny Maier, Rosemarie Trockel, and Andro Wekua

THADDAEUS ROPAC

Ely House, 37 Dover Street, London W1S 4NJ
Tel: +44 20 3813 8400
E-mail: london@ropac.net
Web: www.ropac.net
Tues. – Sat. 10–6

Until June 8
David Salle: Some Versions of Pastoral

TIMOTHY TAYLOR

15 Bolton Street, London W1J 8BG
Tel: +44 20 7409 3344
E-mail: info@timothytaylor.com
Web: www.timothytaylor.com
Tues. – Fri. 10–6, Sat. 11–5

Until June 8
Jonathan Lasker

WHITE CUBE

144–152 Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey, London SE1 3TQ
Bermondsey: Tues. – Sat. 10–6, Sun. 12–6
Tel: +44 20 7930 5373
25–26 Mason’s Yard, London SW1Y 6BU
Mason’s Yard: Tues. – Sat. 10–6
Tel: +44 20 7766 3550
E-mail: enquiries@whitecube.com
Web: www.wbitecube.com
Instagram: @whitecube

Until June 8
Antony Gormley: WITNESS – Early Lead Works (Mason’s Yard)
Until June 29
Richard Hunt: Metamorphosis – A Retrospective (Bermondsey)
June 25 – August 16
Anselm Kiefer (Mason’s Yard)

SCOTLAND

INGLEBY GALLERY

33 Barony Street, Edinburgh EH3 6NX
Tel: +44 131 556 4441
E-mail: info@inglebygallery.com Web: www.inglebygallery.com
Wed. – Sat. 11–5

May 3 – June 14
Ian Hamilton Finlay: Fragments
June 28 – September 13
Aubrey Levinthal

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

HUGH LANE GALLERY

Charlemont House, Parnell Square North, Dublin 1
Tel: +353 1222 5564
E-mail: info.hughlane@dublincity.ie
Web: www.hughlane.ie
Tues. – Thurs. 10–6, Fri. – Sat. 10–5, Sun. 11–5

Until May 18
Brian Maguire: La Grande Illusion
Until May 18
Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled
Until September 28
Ailbhe Ní Bhriain: The Dream Pool Intervals
Ongoing
Francis Bacon Studio & Gallery
Ongoing
Sean Scully Room
Ongoing
Harry Clarke Stained Glass
Ongoing
Collection Displays

IMMA – IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Royal Hospital, Military Road, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Tel: +353 1612 9900
E-mail: info@imma.ie
Web: www.imma.ie
Tues. 10–5:30, Wed. 11:30–5:30 Thurs – Sat. 10–5:30, Sun. 12–5:30

Until May 5
Hamad Butt: Apprehensions
Until October 27
Kith and Kin: The Quilts of Gee’s Bend
Until February 6, 2028
IMMA Collection: Art as Agency
May 2 – September 21
Staying with the Trouble

KERLIN GALLERY

Anne’s Lane, South Anne Street, Dublin 2
Tel: +353 1670 9093
E-mail: gallery@kerlin.ie
Web: www.kerlin.ie
Tues. – Fri. 10–5:30, Sat. 11–4:30

Until May 17
Nathalie Du Pasquier: Saint Fairy Anne
May 23 – June 28
Liam Gillick: À bientôt, j’espère . . .

MOTHER’S TANKSTATION

41–43 Wailing Street, Usher’s Island, Dublin 8
Tel: +353 1671 7654
E-mail: gallery@motherstankstation.com
Web: www.motherstankstation.com
Thurs. – Sat. 12–6

May 1 – June 21
Lee Kit

STONEY ROAD PRESS

11–13 Stoney Road, Dublin 3
Tel: +353 1887 8544
E-mail: mail@stoneyroadpress.com
Web: www.stoneyroadpress.com
Mon. – Fri. 9–5, or by appointment

Until May 25 The Ballinglen Arts Foundation, County Mayo
New editions by Diana Copperwhite, Richard Gorman, Mark Joyce, Alice Maher, Hughie O’Donoghue, Bill Rock, Phil Sanders, Donald Teskey, and Charles Tyrrell
The Stoney Road Press portfolio also includes editions by Charles Arnoldi, Dorothy Cross, John Doherty, Blaise Drummond, Brian Harte, Leah Hewson, Elizabeth Magill, Kelvin Mann, Eilis O’Connell, Brian O’Doherty, and Sean Scully

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The Church

48 Madison Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963
Tel: 631 919 5342 info@thechurchsagharbor.org
www.thechurchsagharbor.org
Thursday – Monday 11–5

Until June 1 Eternal Testament – Resistance and Refusal in Contemporary Native Art: Natalie Ball, Cannupa Hanska Luger, David Bunn Martine, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and others; curated by Meranda Roberts and Jeremy Dennis
June 22 – September 1 The Ark, curated by Eric Fischl

Dia Bridgehampton

23 Corwith Avenue, Bridgehampton, NY 11932
Tel: 212 989 5566 info@diaart.org www.diaart.org
Friday – Sunday 12–3, 3:30–6

Until May 26 Liliana Porter: The Task
June 27 Amy Sillman

The Drawing Room

55 Main Street, 2nd Floor, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 324 5016 info@drawingroom-gallery.com
www.drawingroom-gallery.com
By appointment

Please contact gallery for information.

Eric Firestone Gallery

4 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 604 2386 efg@ericfirestonegallery.com
www.ericfirestonegallery.com
Monday – Sunday 10–6

Please contact gallery for information.

Guild Hall

158 Main Street, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 324 0806 info@guildhall.org www.guildhall.org
Thursday – Sunday 12–5

May 4 – July 13 Almond Zigmund: Wading Room
May 4 – July 13 Functional Relationships:
Artist-Made Furniture

Halsey McKay Gallery

79a Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 604 5770 info@halseymckay.com
www.halseymckay.com
Friday – Sunday 11–6

Until May 18 Cordy Ryman
May 26 – June 23 Will Yackulic: Foreign Domestic
May 26 – June 30 Deep Color Alumni

HARPER’S East Hampton

87 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 324 1131 info@harpersgallery.com
www.harpersbooks.com
Monday – Sunday 10–6

Until May 21 Frederic Tuten
May 24 – July 2 Summer Fair: Selections from Gallery Artists

HESSE FLATOW

68A Schellinger Road, Amagansett, NY 11937
Tel: 646 892 3032 info@hesseflatow.com
www.hesseflatow.com

Please contact gallery for information.

Parrish Art Museum

279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976
Tel: 631 283 2118 info@parrishart.org www.parrishart.org
Thursday – Monday 11–5

Until June 9 FRESH PAINT: Reggie Burrows Hodges
Until September 1 Shirin Neshat: Born of Fire
Until January 1, 2026 Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Collider
May 11 – September 21 Sean Scully: The Albee Barn, Montauk

Pollock-Krasner House

830 Springs-Fireplace Road, East Hampton, NY 11937
Tel: 631 324 4929 www.pkhouse.org
Open by reservation May 2 – October 31
Thursday – Sunday 12–5
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ALTMAN SIEGEL

Dogpatch, 1150 25th Street, San Francisco, 94107
Tues – Fri 10–6, Sat 11–5
Presidio Heights, 3067 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, 94115
Thurs – Sat 11–5
info@altmansiegel.com 415 576 9300 altmansiegel.com
Until May 31 Rafael Delacruz: Montage (Dogpatch)
May 1 – May 24 Alex Olson (Presidio Heights)
June 5 – July 19 Stephen Pace (Dogpatch)
June 5 – July 19 Tyler Ormsby (Dogpatch)

ANGLIM/TRIMBLE

1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, 94107
gallery@anglimtrimble.com 415 433 2710 anglimtrimble.com
Tues – Sat 11–5
Until June 28 Ajit Chauhan

ANTHONY MEIER

21 Throckmorton Ave, Mill Valley, 94941
gallery@anthonymeier.com 415 351 1400 anthonymeier.com
Tues – Fri 10–5
Until May 2 Jesse Schlesinger and Manfredo De Souza-netto
May 29 – August 8 Consider the Oyster

BERGGRUEN GALLERY

10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, 94105
info@berggruen.com 415 781 4629 berggruen.com
Mon – Fri 10–5
May 1 – June 19 Isca Greenfield-Sanders: Cut From A Dream
May 1 – June 19 Val Britton: Ghost Coast
May 1 – June 19 Vanessa Marsh and Joni Sternbach:
Western Wave

CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY

248 Utah Street, San Francisco, 94103
registrar@cclarkgallery.com 415 399 1439 cclarkgallery.com
Tues – Sat 11–6
Until May 24 Zeina Barakeh: CYBOTAGE
Until May 24 Andy Diaz Hope: Yesterday's Tomorrows
May 31 – July 19 Arleene Correa Valencia: Código Del
Perdedor / The Losing Man's Code
May 31 – July 19 Alejandro Cartagena: Entre Espacios /
In Between Spaces

CROWN POINT PRESS

20 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, 94105
info@crownpoint.com 415 974 6273 crownpoint.com
@crownpointpress
Mon – Fri 9–5
Until May 9 Spring Evolutions: Anne Appleby, John Cage,
Pia Fries, Susan Middleton, Alyson Shotz, Pat Steir, Richard
Tuttle, and others

FRAENKEL GALLERY

49 Geary Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, 94108
mail@fraenkelgallery.com 415 981 2661 fraenkelgallery.com
Tues – Fri 10:30–5:30, Sat 11–5, and by appointment
Until May 23 Alec Soth: Advice for Young Artists
May 29 – August 9 Richard Learoyd and Frances Palmer

HASHIMOTO CONTEMPORARY I SAN FRANCISCO

1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, 94107
sf@hashimotocontemporary.com 415 655 9265 hashimotocontemporary.com
Tues – Sat 10–6
May 3 – May 31 Genevieve Cohn: In Defense of Tenderness

JESSICA SILVERMAN

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, 94108
info@jessicasilvermangallery.com 415 255 9508 jessicasilvermangallery.com
Tues – Sat 10–6
Until May 31 Julia Isidrez
Until May 31 Hayal Pozanti
June 5 – July 19 Margo Wolowiec
June 5 – July 19 Andrea Bowers

REBECCA CAMACHO PRESENTS

526 Washington Street, San Francisco, 94111
info@rebeccacamacho.com 415 800 7228 rebeccacamacho.com
Tues – Sat 11–5
May 1 – June 14 Marie Herwald Hermann
May 1 – June 14 Celeste: Hacer brotar / To sprout

RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, 94107
info@renabranstengallery.com 415 982 3292 renabranstengallery.com
Tues – Sat 11–5, and by appointment
Until May 31 Wendel A. White: Schools for the Colored

GALLERY WENDI NORRIS

436 Jackson Street, San Francisco, 94111
38 Hotaling Place, San Francisco, 94111
info@gallerywendinorris.com 415 346 7812 gallerywendinorris.com
@gallerywendinorris
Tues – Sat 11–6, and by appointment
Until May 10 Enrique Martínez Celaya: The Wilderness
(Jackson Street and Hotaling Place)
May 22 – July 3 Lisa Jo (Jackson Street)

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21/F, Coda Designer Centre,
62 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang
+852 2503 2331 info@axelvervoordtgallery.com.hk axel-vervoordt.com
Thurs – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 24 Sopheap Pich: Cambodian Metal
May 31 – July 26 Zoran Mušič

BLINDSPOT GALLERY

28 Wong Chuk Hang Road,
15/F Po Chai Industrial Building, Wong Chuk Hang
+852 2517 6238 info@blindspotgallery.com blindspotgallery.com
Tues – Sat 10:30am to 6:30pm

Until May 10 Sin Wai Kin: The Time of Our Lives
May 13 – June 28 Wing Po So

EMPTY GALLERY

18 & 19/F, Grand Marine Center,
3 Yue Fung Street, Tin Wan
+852 2563 3396 contact@emptygallery.com emptygallery.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 24 Richard Hawkins: The Garden of Loved Ones
Until May 24 Covey Gong: TRST03

GAGOSIAN

7/F, Pedder Building,
12 Pedder Street, Central
+852 2151 0555 hongkong@gagosian.com gagosian.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 3 Sarah Sze

HAUSER & WIRTH

G/F, 8 Queen's Road, Central
+852 3958 7188 hongkong@hauserwirth.com hauserwirth.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until June 21 Louise Bourgeois: Soft Landscape

KIANG MALINGUE 馬凌畫廊

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai
+852 2810 0317 office@kiangmalingue.com kiangmalingue.com
Tues – Sat, 12pm to 6 pm, by appointment only

Until May 13 Ho Tzu Nyen: 3 Stories – Monsters,
Opium, Time
May 22 – July 5 Chou Yu-Cheng

MOU PROJECTS

13/F, Blue Box Factory Building, 25 Hing Wo St, Aberdeen
info@mouprojects.com mouprojects.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 3 Tap Chan: Fabric of Belonging

PACE

80 Queen's Road, 12/F H Queen's Mall, Central
+852 2608 5065 hongkong@pacegallery.com pacegallery.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 9 Robert Indiana: The Shape of the World

TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY 大館當代美術館

JC Contemporary, Tai Kwun,
10 Hollywood Road, Central
+852 3559 2600 art@taikwun.hk taikwun.hk
Tues – Sun 11am to 7pm

Until June 8 Maeve Brennan: Records
Until August 17 On Kawara: Rules of Freedom,
Freedom of Rules
Until November 26, 2026 Alicja Kwade: Waiting
Pavilions (Prison Yard)

WHITE CUBE

50 Connaught Road, Central
+852 2592 2000 press@whitecube.com whitecube.com
Tues – Sat 11am to 7pm

Until May 17 Lynne Drexler: The Seventies



THE FIRST Homosexuals

THE BIRTH OF A NEW IDENTITY
1869-1939

WRIGHTWOOD
659
CHICAGO

With over 300 artworks from more than 100 museums and private collections around the world, the groundbreaking exhibition *The First Homosexuals* explores a sea change in how society regarded homosexuality in the wake of the coining of the term “homosexual” in 1869. Before this watershed moment, same-sex desire marked something you did, not necessarily something you were. *The First Homosexuals* examines how, for the first time, homosexuals were cleaved from the rest of the population and given an identity defined by their sexuality.

MAY 2 – JULY 26, 2025

wrightwood659.org | advance ticket purchase required

The First Homosexuals: The Birth of a New Identity, 1869-1939 is presented at Wrightwood 659 by Alphawood Exhibitions.

Image Credit: Marie Laurencin, *Le Bal élégant ou La Danse à la campagne*, 1913, 146 x 115 cm, © Fondation Foujita / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris 2024. Image © Musée Marie Laurencin.

GLOBAL TRANSMISSIONS

DELINDA COLLIER ON “PROJECT A BLACK PLANET:
THE ART AND CULTURE OF PANAFRICA”

FLANKING THE ENTRANCE to the Art Institute of Chicago’s “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica” were two wood figures: Wangechi Mutu’s *Tree Woman*, 2016, and *Oxóssi*, 1960, by Agnaldo Manoel dos Santos. Though painted decades apart, both sculptures embody shared impulses that surfaced repeatedly throughout this wide-ranging show: an effort to assimilate a classical sculptural vocabulary—in this case, that of the Central African power figure—and an attempt to reimagine the human form in ways that encode messages of possibility, solidarity, and resistance. Curated by Antawan I. Byrd, Adom Getachew, Elvira Dyangani Ose, and Matthew S. Witkovsky, the exhibition brought together dozens of historically significant paintings and sculptures for the first time, a rich array of 350 objects from around the world. Chicago itself took center stage, as the show’s festival-like run included events across the city through the spring. The show’s size and scope were thrilling, like nothing we had seen since Okwui Enwezor’s watershed 2002 presentation “The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994” at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, which the curators cited as their “most imposing precedent.”¹





JUMUIYA YA WATU WA KIAFIKA WOTE
AWUJO GBOGBO AWON AFRICA
مجتمع كل شعوب أفريقيا
ALL AFRICAN PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY

JUMUIYA YA WATU WA KIAFRIKA WOTE / AWUJO GBOGBO AWON AFRICA
مجتمع لكل شعوب أفريقيا / ALL AFRICAN PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY

D Aina / Iru lwa / Irinpa / النوع / Type
Jina la ukoo / Oruko / لقب / Name
Surname
Scott
Mafita yariyopawa / Awon oruko abiso / الاسم / Name
Given Name
Dread
Uraia / Onle-ede rin / الجنسية / Nationality
United States of America
Ya kuzaliwa / Ojo ibi / تاريخ الميلاد / Date of Birth
1965
Nambani ya pasapoti / Nambani lwa irinpa / رقم جواز السفر / Passport Number
010029014
Tarichi ya kutolawa / Daka / تاريخ الاصدار / Date of Issue
12 Apr 2033

[illegible]

Dread Scott, *All African People's Community Passport*, 2024, digital offset and ink-jet print, closed 5 × 3½". Photo: Matteo de Mayda/*New York Times*/Redux.

Pan-Africanism encompasses cultural, political, and artistic movements spanning Europe, America, Africa, and Latin America that aimed at unifying people of African descent around shared objectives. Its formal origins trace to 1900, when Trinidadian lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams convened the first Pan-African Congress in London; several additional conferences followed, organized by W. E. B. Du Bois. Those gatherings anchored the rapid development of Black visual art, music, dance, literature, and political action. As the exhibition illustrated, Pan-Africanism also corresponded with urgent anti-colonial, anti-apartheid, and civil rights movements worldwide. In the time frame covered by “Project a Black Planet,” Pan-Africanism’s adherents—aided by the expansion of air travel—sought to foster dialogue through new modernist media, including magazines, journals, records, fashion, painting, and sculpture, which served as vessels for the transmission of a message of unity across borders and time zones. In an example of what catalogue contributor Tsitsi Ella Jaji has elsewhere called “stereomodernism,” the exhibition included records, video installation, sound recordings (what a thrill to hear Audre Lorde’s voice in the gallery!), and a sound art installation.² Indeed, as Pan-Africanism attempted to capture the world’s attention—stratifying and multiplying across the space and decades of modernism—new media, with its possibility for amplification and electronic transmission, proved essential. That’s what came to my mind as I looked at Kader Attia’s *Asesinos! Asesinos! (Assassins! Assassins!)*, 2014, an installation of reclaimed doors with megaphones assembled as a crowd. Pan-Africanism

was built in relation to a broader sensorium than the visual, and cannot be grasped along the visual/conceptual axis alone.

A film series did some of the work of projection. Running from August 2024 to January 2025, it featured five films spanning the 1960s to the present, including Sarah Maldoror’s groundbreaking *wrong: Monangambééé* (1968), Larry Achiampong’s *Relic Traveller: Phase 1* (2017), and newer works such as Mónica de Miranda’s *Path to the Stars* (2022). The mix of contemporary and historical films emphasized how contemporary filmmakers continue to engage with the watershed period of the ’50s and ’60s, when decolonization movements and civil rights struggles led to unprecedented achievements in national sovereignty and cultural recognition, while simultaneously nurturing visions of Black global connectedness that suggest the vibrancy of the Pan-Africanist project.

Pan-African discourse was split among three subgroups within the exhibition, represented by the linguistically disparate intellectual traditions of Garveyism, Négritude, and Quilombismo. The first of these, emerging out of the Anglophone networks of Du Bois and Williams, was named after Jamaican activist Marcus Garvey, whose “Back to Africa” movement included the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) established in 1914. Négritude, or “Blackness,” was a literary movement founded in ’30s Paris by African and Caribbean students and intellectuals, such as Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Paulette and Jean Nardal, and that served as the official cultural program of Senegal under Léopold Sédar

As Pan-Africanism attempted to capture the world’s attention—stratifying and multiplying across the space and decades of modernism—new media, with its possibility for amplification and electronic transmission, proved essential.





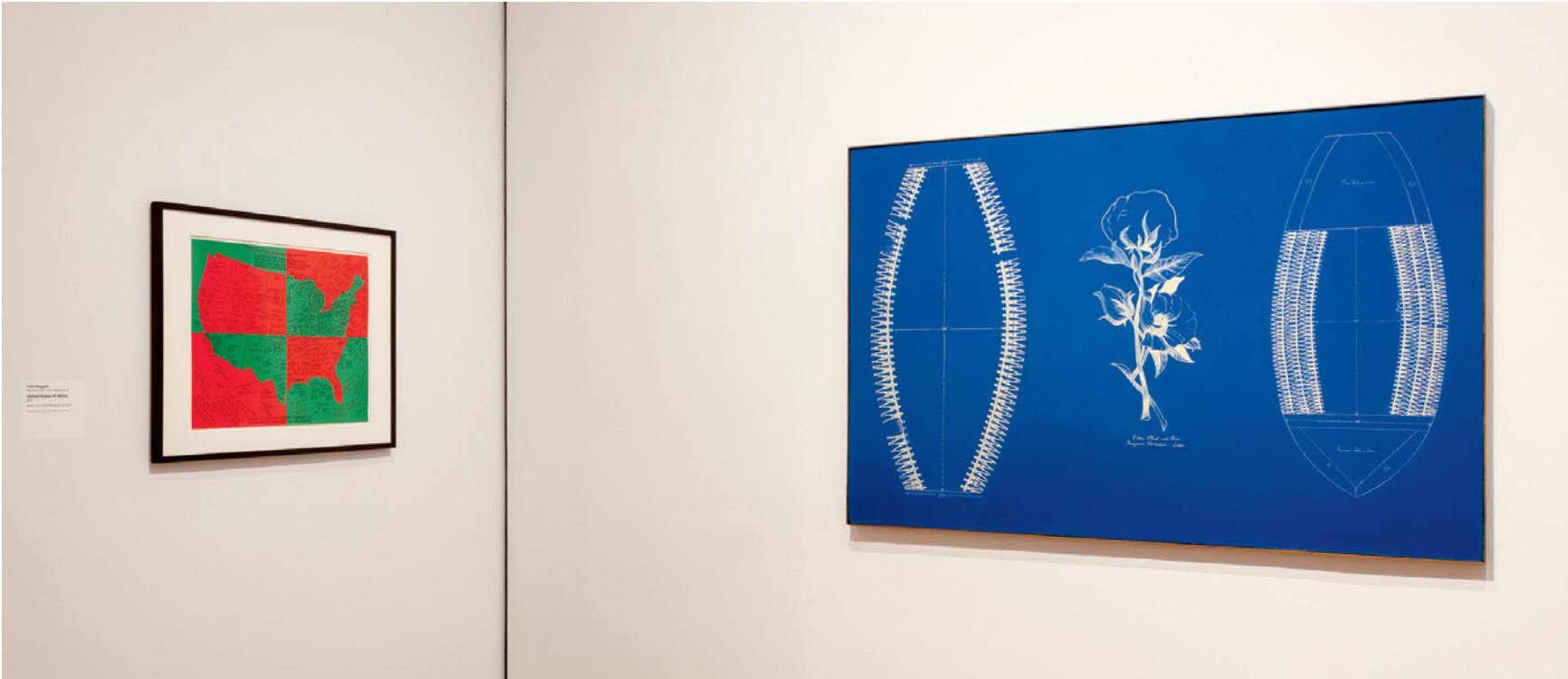
Opposite page, from left: **Wangechi Mutu**, *Tree Woman*, 2016, paper pulp, soil, wood, rock, steel. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago, 2024. Photo: Joe Tallarico. **Agaldo Manoel dos Santos**, *Oxóssi*, 1960, wood. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago, 2024. Photo: Joe Tallarico. This page, clockwise from top: **Kader Attia**, *Asesinos! Asesinos! (Assassins! Assassins!)*, 2014, thirty-five doors, ten megaphones. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago, 2024. Photo: Joe Tallarico. **Sarah Maldoror**, *Monangambéé*, 1968, 35 mm, black-and-white, sound, 16 minutes. **Mónica de Miranda**, *Path to the Stars*, 2022, HD video, color, sound, 34 minutes 41 seconds.

Senghor. Finally, Quilombismo is named for Brazilian artist and scholar Abdias Nascimento's 1980 term derived from the *quilombo* communities of formerly enslaved Brazilians—a Lusophone Black solidarity movement frequently left out of accounts of the Pan-African project. The first three galleries explored the movements as thematic anchors rather than as historical periods or in relation to geographical origins. This framework then expanded through five conceptual lenses in additional galleries respectively labeled “Interiors,” “Blackness,” “Circulation,” “Agitation,” and “Interdependence.”

MOTIFS, OR “AFROTROPES”

So how does one begin to make sense of this exhibition—which addressed a broad geographic and temporal span and included a broad and diverse arrangement of

objects and artworks? One answer comes via art historians Huey Copeland and Krista Thompson, who in the past decade have proposed a new method for theorizing Black art. Their approach centers on the Afrotrope, a coinage for, as they put it, “those recurrent visual forms that have emerged within and become central to the formation of African diasporic culture and identity.” As examples, they cite the slave ship icon from 1788 by the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, South African photographer Sam Nzima's 1976 photograph of Hector Pieterse's murdered body in Soweto, and the I AM A MAN signs held by striking Memphis sanitation workers in 1968. The Afrotrope is a spatiotemporally mobile visual referent, a type of call-and-response structure and cultural coding that takes flight from historical specificity, detaching and circulating in a play of forms, especially with increased mechanical (and digital) reproduction.³ The Afrotrope



Above: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. From left: Faith Ringgold, *United States of Attica*, 1972; Malcolm Bailey, *Untitled*, 1969. Photo: Joe Tallarico.
 Below: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. Center: Simone Leigh, *Dunham*, 2017. Photo: Joe Tallarico.



is to contemporary art as the motif is to modernism, and the exhibition mapped them together. In the first rooms of “Project a Black Planet,” the chronologically earliest, classical Pan-African works by Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, Papa Ibra Tall, Malvin Gray Johnson, and others displayed what Elizabeth Harney calls “recognizable pan-African motifs—masks, carved statues, and incised combs—ironically, all conventional signs of *l’art primitif*, highly valued by European primitivist collectors.”⁴ The work of flattening out three-dimensional sculpture into a two-dimensional painting was analogous to intellectualizing and abstracting Blackness as media became more mobile in the early twentieth century. Through the Afrotrope framework, we can now recognize this translation as a deliberate visual strategy that enabled resistance through circulation. The motifs in these works became instruments of what Gayatri Spivak later called “strategic essentialism”—for instance, the flattened and ethnically ambiguous masks in paintings such as Palmer Hayden’s *Fétiche et Fleurs*, 1932/1933, and Ben Enwonwu’s 1948 *Still Life* depicting figures in an ancestral shrine. These two early examples of Pan-African cultural production, when read via the Afrotrope, reveal themselves not as naive primitivism but as sophisticated visual arguments operating along the aesthetic trajectory established by Fuller’s maquette for her famous sculpture *Ethiopia Rising*, 1921, which depicts a female figure ascending out of her funerary wrappings with a pharaonic headdress—considered the first Pan-African artwork.

Ensuing galleries moved more firmly into the domain of the Afrotrope, as embodied for example in the diagram of slave ship cargo in Malcolm Bailey’s *Untitled*, 1969, an acrylic painting rendered to appear like a botanist’s cyanotype.⁵

photo into his painting, the curators underscored the crucial role of reproductive technologies in the dissemination and projection of Pan-African ideology and ideas. As Musab Younis argues in the catalogue, “photographs and flags were both essential to Garveyite aesthetics.”⁷

Quilombismo was called upon to vastly expand the set of references associated with Pan-Africanism. In the catalogue, Witkovsky categorizes Quilombismo as a secessionist strain of Pan-Africanism, which is one way to characterize its deliberate opacity and visual systems meant to be legible only to those within specific communities. Nascimento acted as the bridge from this enclave’s set of practices to international Pan-Africanism, using the tricolor flag in *Simbiose Africana no. 3*, 1973, as backdrop to Candomblé and Afro-Brazilian symbols such as a serpent eating its tail and the quartered circle. Some of this work thus possessed religious potency akin to dos Santos’s power figure in the entrance of the exhibit, protected as sacred knowledge by generations of enslaved Africans taken to South America. Modernism is troubled by such belief, or metaphysics, as well as by cultural coding, the presence of something so local that it threatens to undermine universalism. The “sacred geometry” in Nascimento’s paintings is both culturally specific and a product of global modernism. The exhibition relied on a brief window of those symbols being extrapolated into the larger struggle for emancipation and, in particular, on Nascimento’s own thesis in “O Quilombismo” (1980).

The penultimate gallery contained a tiered display that served as a powerful culmination of the exhibition’s exploration of Pan-African tropes/motifs and, in particular, their relationship to abstraction and figuration. A presentation of sculp-

The work of flattening out three-dimensional sculpture into a two-dimensional painting was analogous to intellectualizing and abstracting Blackness as media became more mobile in the early twentieth century.

The tricolor flag of Garveyism was featured in such now-iconic works as David Hammons’s *African American Flag*, 1990. The contour line of Africa’s continental margin appeared repeatedly, as in Kerry James Marshall’s *Africa Restored (Cheryl as Cleopatra)*, 2003; Dana C. Chandler’s print *Pan-African Man*, 1970; a cover of *Ebony* from 1976; a 1970 AfriCOBRA exhibition poster; Dread Scott’s *All African People’s Community Passport*, 2024; and Mwangi Hutter’s *Static Drift*, 2001. The journey of the mask of Queen Mother Idia through Pan-African visual culture was notable: First featured on publications for the First World Festival of Black Arts (FESMAN) in 1966 because of its disputed ownership by the British Museum via the British Punitive Expedition of 1879, it achieved widespread recognition as the symbol of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977 and appeared in a 1969 collage by Romare Bearden. As Byrd argues, the mask’s widespread reproduction served a dual purpose, simultaneously celebrating West Africa’s artistic heritage while highlighting the ongoing legacy of European colonial plunder.⁶

The exhibition included contemporary works that reflexively document the process of images becoming tropes. In the “Garveyism” gallery, visitors found a 1924 James Van Der Zee photograph of activist and critic Kojo Tovalou-Houénou seated between Garvey and UNIA deputy potentate George O. Marke. Beside it hung Tavares Strachan’s *Kojo*, 2021, a painting with a collage-like array of visual ephemera, including a flag of Ethiopia, a crosshairs, and an image of Houénou drawn from Van Der Zee’s photo. By emphasizing Strachan’s assimilation of the

tural works from various locations and time periods, including the twenty-first century, this installation reasserted the mask’s physical presence, affirming its status not merely as a figure in Pan-Africanism’s strategic visual vocabulary but as a classical African form. Central to the grouping was Simone Leigh’s raffia mask *Dunham*, 2017, an homage to Katherine Dunham, the well-known dancer and anthropologist who, in inverting the basic tenets of anthropology, collapsed the distance between herself and her “research subjects.”⁸ Leigh’s treatment of the masquerade likewise dissolves distinctions between subject and object: An encrusted head sans face atop a raffia dome functions neither as a fully articulated human form nor as an abstract sculpture. The work is neither represented subject nor literal object, resisting categorization as either “someone” or “something.”

ABSTRACTION AND FIGURATION

Leigh’s *Dunham* is an example of “midpoint mimesis,” as Robert Farris Thompson once called such an approach, which is also found in the “moderation of resemblance” in Yoruba aesthetics.⁹ Midpoint mimesis was also taken up by artists associated with AfriCOBRA, the Chicago-based artist collective started in the ’60s, for whom the aesthetic was a style or “vibe” that sat between popular and fine, graphical and painterly, “objective and non-objective.”¹⁰ The particular deployment of “midpoint mimesis” could have profound political implications. Take, for instance, the examples of Iba N’Diaye and Papa Ibra Tall, two leading Senegalese painters who worked during the Négritude movement under Senghor’s influence



at the École de Dakar. In Chicago, Tall's *Le guerrier* (The Warrior), 1964, employed precisely rendered force lines and dynamic human abstractions, the canvas organized by graphic rather than painterly lines. Several galleries away, a pair of paintings by Tall's aesthetic antagonist, N'Diaye—*La femme qui pleure* (The Woman Who Cries) and *La femme qui hurle* (The Woman Who Screams), both 1986—were supple and richly textured, displaying gestural brush marks and drips with a force that was emotional instead of graphical. Given the twenty years separating the work by Tall and those by N'Diaye, the exhibition grouped them under two different themes from two periods of postcolonial nationalism in Africa—yet the pair of artists were also contemporaries who fiercely debated the reigning discourse of Négritude and Africanité generally. One can see in their work a working out of the terms of their global artistic identities in these debates: For Tall, the onus on the artist was to reject the colonial dichotomy of traditional and contemporary and to produce recognizable forms translated through the vocabulary of pattern and texture rather than naturalistic rendering, another feature of mid-point mimesis. For N'Diaye, no such return was possible, only a hybridization of influences in an individual shaping of artistic vision, akin to that which he admired in jazz music.

Thus, questions about the supposed categorical purity of race were coterminous with that of form. The curators explored this dynamic in the gallery devoted to

Blackness, where viewers found Marlene Dumas's painting *Albino*, 1986, next to Rasheed Araeen's abstract latticelike hanging sculpture *Punj Neelay* (Five Blues), 1970. These two works speak to the fundamental problems of representation posed by non-Black artists who identified with the political aims of Pan-Africanism: Dumas, a white South African artist, paints a Black African albino, described by Sandrine Colard in the catalogue as one of apartheid's "most disruptive subjects,"¹¹ while the Karachi-born Araeen made geometric minimalism that his British audiences refused to see as anything but "Islamic" art.¹² Later, Araeen would join the British arm of the Black Panthers and make a foray into more pointedly political art, as in his performance *Paki Bastard* (*Portrait of the Artist as a Black Person*), 1977.

The struggle to characterize figuration and abstraction in a global context also concerns artists like Ibrahim El-Salahi, who linked his practice of abstraction directly with Sufism.¹³ Included in the exhibition was *Funeral and the Crescent*, 1963, a significant work produced to commemorate the assassination of the Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba. El-Salahi was a major figure in the Khartoum School in Sudan and participated in "calligraphic modernism," a key aspect of Arab Modern art.¹⁴ His process of abstraction, during the time he painted *Funeral*, consisted of manipulating the shapes of Arabic calligraphy to test the boundaries of representation, or the linguistic aspects of abstraction and



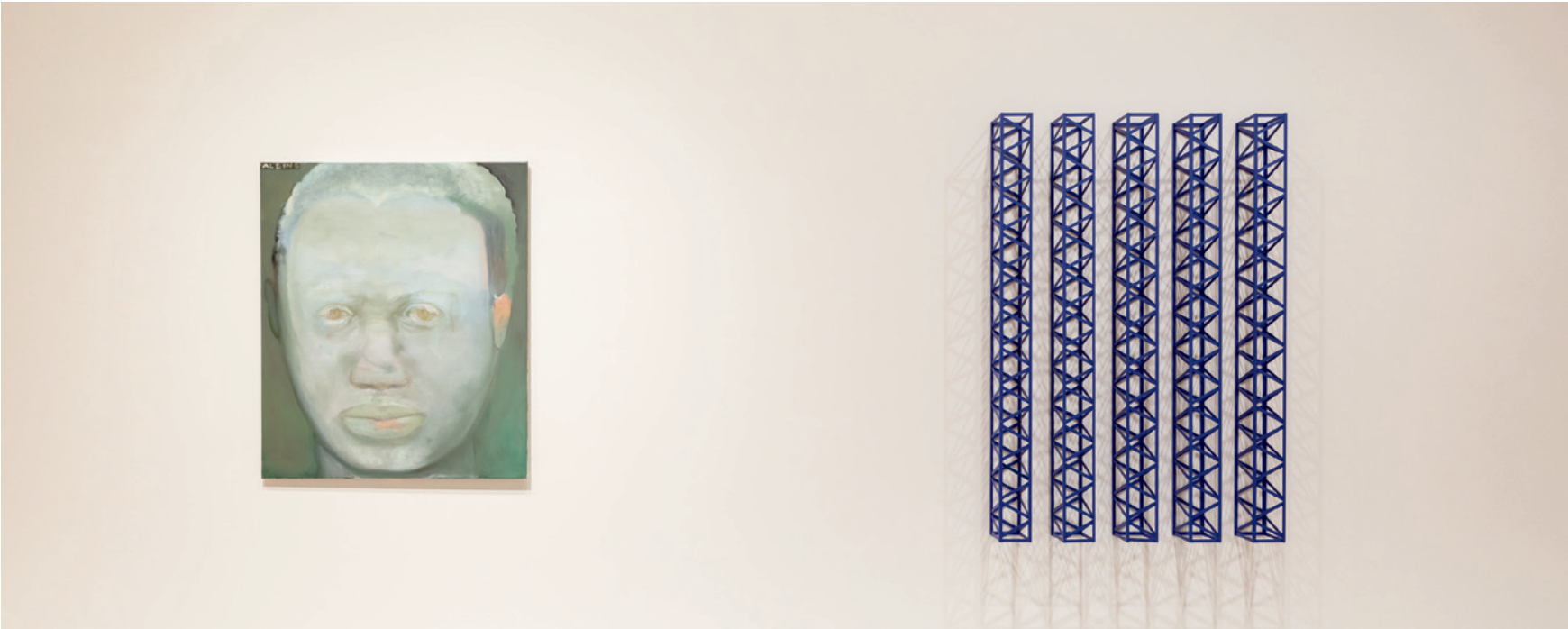
Opposite page, left: Dana C. Chandler Jr. (aka Akin Duro), *Pan-African Man*, 1970, screen print, 22 x 17".

Opposite page, right: Tavares Strachan, *Kojo*, 2021, oil, enamel, and pigment on acrylic, 58 x 58".

Top left: Iba N'Diaye, *La femme qui hurle* (The Woman Who Screams), 1986, oil on canvas, 46 x 35".

Left: Ibrahim El-Salahi, *Funeral and the Crescent*, 1963, oil on hardboard, 40 x 37 3/8".

Above: Papa Ibra Tall, *Le guerrier* (The Warrior), 1964, oil on Celotex board, 52 3/4 x 41".



Above: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. From left: Marlene Dumas, *Albino*, 1986; Rasheed Araeen, *Punj Neelay* (Five Blues), 1970. Photo: Joe Tallarico. Below: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. Center: Nicholas Hlobo, *Ndiyafuna*, 2006. Photo: Joe Tallarico. Opposite page: Zanele Muholi, *Somnyama III*, Paris, 2014, gelatin silver print, 33 × 24½”.





figuration. This investigation included the study of the sound of language in relation to its visual aspects—the chanting of prayers for the dying, for instance. Ittikhar Dadi argues that “for modernist Arab artists, the word *hurufiyyah* (from the Arabic letter, *harf*), which already carried an intellectual, esoteric, and Sufi charge, was now invested with a new connotation of formal abstraction. . . .”¹⁵ El-Salahi’s work appeared in the 1966 FESMAN and he attended a workshop at the Mbari Artist and Writers Club in Ibadan, Nigeria, in the 1960s.

MOBILITY

The show throughout explored how transportation infrastructure became central to Pan-African visions of economic and cultural independence. This theme emerged through artifacts like the passport issued by Scott’s *All African People’s Consulate* and stock notes from the Black Star Line, a shipping company established by Garvey in 1918 to facilitate commerce and transportation throughout the Americas and Caribbean. In founding the company, Garvey underscored his clear position on economic mobility: Unless Africans and their descendants established their own means of production and consumption, they would remain

“Project a Black Planet” found us in a rapidly evolving geopolitical situation shaped by constant mobility and connectivity that at once facilitates great acts of unity and unparalleled tribalism and nationalism.

excluded from multinational financial networks. The significance of this infrastructure was captured by William Greaves in his documentary about FESMAN, which documents the arrival of Haile Selassie, emperor of Ethiopia, in Dakar—a moment that, as Tobias Wofford has noted, inspires religious reverence among Rastafarians thanks to the anti-colonial undertones of Selassie harnessing the most advanced technologies of the day.¹⁶ Yet if the twentieth century heralded a new period of mobility and connection, that corresponded with the pernicious retrenchment of division. As Sophia Azeb describes in her catalogue essay, when Kathleen Neal Cleaver, an American Black Panther, visited the Pan-African Festival in Algiers in 1969, she was shocked by the cultural fragmentation she encountered. As Azeb puts it, “The complicated tribal and ethnic divisions among Arabs, Berbers, and Africans bewildered Panthers accustomed to simple stratifications of color and class.”¹⁷

That is precisely where “Project a Black Planet” found us: in a rapidly evolving geopolitical situation shaped by constant mobility and connectivity that at once facilitates great acts of unity and unparalleled tribalism and nationalism. Thus, the fact that the show culminated in a celebration of queerness and “interdependence” was an audacious move given the state of things in the United States and on the African continent. One can argue that nation-states that have outlawed homosexual behavior are scapegoating queer folks to distract an underserved public. One could also argue (as reactionary African politicians and religious figures routinely have) that homosexuality is a category invented by the West and imposed on Africans. To project a Black and *queer* planet is an exercise in envisioning the world that you want to see, that we ought to see, albeit one that does not pervasively exist now. One hopes, that is, that this curatorial gesture and the artworks included have eventual bearing on the de jure and de facto discrimination against queer Africans in almost every country on the continent, and at least as many outside of Africa.

As I finish writing this review, news has just come in that longtime LGBTQ+ activist and Islamic scholar Muhsin Hendricks was assassinated in Gqeberha, South Africa, after officiating two interfaith weddings. South Africa, while securing constitutional rights for gay people in 1996, has long struggled with cultural homophobia. In addition to highlighting important and overlooked queer African artists such as Nicholas Hlobo and Zanele Muholi, the exhibition, on its final wall, featured the Queer African Manifesto/Declaration, written anonymously in 2010 in Nairobi. One sentence stood out to me: “The possibilities are endless.” This simple statement becomes both hopeful and urgent, suggesting the abundant potential of intersectional liberation movements while implicitly acknowledging the necessity of defending these spaces of dreaming. One projects a message without a guarantee of its reception. □

“Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica” travels to Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Nov. 6, 2025–Apr. 6, 2026; Barbican Centre, London, June 11–Sept. 6, 2026; KANAL-Centre Pompidou, Brussels, Spring 2027.

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For notes, see page 153.

SONIC REGISTERS

IVY G. WILSON ON THE AURAL SCENOGRAPHY OF “PROJECT A BLACK PLANET: THE ART AND CULTURE OF PANAFRICA”



Above: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. Center: Azikiwe Mohammed, *My First Time*, 2016–. Opposite page, top: Roy Ayers Ubiquity, *Red, Black & Green*, 1973, album cover with speaker. Installation view, Art Institute of Chicago, 2024–25. Opposite page, bottom: View of “Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica,” 2024–25, Art Institute of Chicago. From left: David Hammons, *African-American Flag*, 1990; Chris Ofili, *Union Black*, 2003. Photos: Joe Tallarico.

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO’S recent exhibition “Project a Black Planet” comprised an exquisite display of some of the most compelling artworks pertaining to the art and culture of Pan-Africa—objects that were also enveloped in, if not amplified by, an aural scenography. The ways that sound, emanating from speakers or depicted on album covers, was interpolated with the visual was indeed one of the exhibition’s most entrancing aspects and radical critical interventions.

“Project a Black Planet” was, in many respects, vivified by its very first foray into sound with the inclusion of Roy Ayers’s song “Red, Black, and Green” in one of the initial galleries. The installation presented the cover of the composer’s eponymous 1973 album plainly framed on a wall, with a two-minute selection of the song issuing from a small wooden speaker box; the arrangement suggests domestic space and, by extension, alluded to the ways in which these sonic artifacts move through the world and inflect others’ lived experience. That inflection is exemplified musically by Ayers’s vibraphone and lyrics, which assume the valence of an anthem. By the time Ayers had released the track, the colors red, black, and green were already circulating across the Black diaspora as a rallying call for Pan-Africanism—beginning at least as early as Marcus Garvey’s declaration

that “red represent[s] the noble blood that unites all people of African ancestry, the colour black for the people, green for the rich land of Africa.” Situated adjacent to Chris Ofili’s *Union Black*, 2003, and David Hammons’s *African-American Flag*, 1990, Ayers’s composition animated the gallery in a synesthetic way that allowed for, if not compelled, the figurative covering or draping of visitors in the material fabrics of Pan-Africanism, even while it imbued their audio channels with its sonic registers.

Sound was present throughout the show, sometimes in video works that had a conspicuous audio component (e.g., the calm and ironic voice of Ilan Yacine Harris-Babou in her 2018 video *Reparation Hardware* or the amplified throbbing of a heart in Dawit Petros’s single-channel 2013 *Notations for a New Pan-Africanism*) and sometimes in tracks that appeared as part of the scenography or exhibition design. In a section titled “Garveyism,” for instance, visitors heard the Garvey’s voice reciting nearly one and a half minutes of the “Great Black Nationalist” speech from 1921. In the recording, the Universal Negro Improvement Association leader extols the possibilities of a large-scale—and separate—global Black community, but the selection tapered off just as he is about to proclaim that this coming community



Museums are primarily designed for the viewing of objects; “Project a Black Planet,” meanwhile, caused this framework to crumble, refusing to reduce sound to a mere backdrop or auxiliary to the visual.



is one that believes “in the God of Ethiopia,” making an acute reference to the cultural politics and long history of Ethiopianism. The recording’s aural scenography set the stage for the section’s visual pieces, including two gelatin silver prints by photographer James Van Der Zee. As visitors heard the fever pitch of Garvey’s speech, they also saw the activist in Van Der Zee’s photo—sitting alongside the anti-colonialists George O. Marke and Kojo Tovalou-Houénou as if a Pan-African state had been realized.

The words of the self-identified “Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, mother, warrior, poet” Audre Lorde sonically imbued the “Quilombismo” gallery. In the recording, Lorde reads one of her most famous poems, “A Litany of Survival” (1978), recorded at Amerika Haus Berlin in 1984. Inasmuch as Lorde’s words “we were never meant to survive” function as the poem’s refrain, another cluster of words—“seeking a now that can breed / futures”—gain a different kind of tonal resonance in this context, limning a discursive substrate for any number of Black political projects, from abolitionism in the nineteenth century to Afrofuturism in the twenty-first. Whether inflecting speech or poem—the former delivered to hundreds at a rally during the height of the New Negro Movement, the latter recited before dozens of policy officials and academics in Berlin during the height of the Cold War—the voices of Garvey, who was born in Jamaica, and Lorde, whose mother was Grenadian and father Barbadian, reminded us that the Pan-African project was always animated by Caribbean accents.

The most direct example in the show of artists themselves using sound was arguably Azikiwe Mohammed’s *My First Time*, 2016–. The installation pairs a classic reel-to-reel player with three sets of vintage speakers that play recordings of a group of interviewees from across different geographies of the Black diaspora as they voice their personal stories of “the first time” they understood that they were Black. The ensuing narratives are revealing and empowering, equally vulnerable and resolute, and, in a word, haunting for the ways in which that moment of recognition is echoed again and again, as something like an auditory hallucination that has become all too real. Mohammed—who eschews the label “artist” in favor of that of a “dude who makes stuff”—makes the “making” part evident through his manipulation of audio equipment. Beginning by disaggregating the paired speakers to form six nonsequential individual channels, Mohammed alters the interface between the digital and analog worlds by presumably recording his initial interviews digitally and then transferring that audio onto magnetic tapes. Next, he plays these tapes on a TEAC X-10R, a vintage tape deck whose particular technological innovations allow for continuous playback—recycling the twelve minutes and four seconds of Mohammed’s interviewees’ words almost endlessly. Extending the sounds of different voices story after story ad infinitum, *My First Time* suggests that these individual moments of recognition embody a kind of collective trauma that is continually on repeat.

In many respects, these examples underscore not only the question of how the synesthetic registers of Pan-Africanism’s political project mobilize sound but also the problem of how museums conceptualize the relationship between the sonic and the visual. Such institutions are primarily designed for the viewing of objects; “Project a Black Planet,” meanwhile, caused this framework to crumble, refusing to reduce sound to a mere backdrop or auxiliary to the visual. For his 2014 installation *Asesinos! Asesinos!* (Assassins! Assassins!), Kader Attia took dozens of colorful household doors and split them in half to create hinged A-frames, topping these structures with handheld bullhorns. Installed in this show, the work carried a message that was as blunt as it was resonant: The Pan-Africanist project will always be accompanied by sonic emissions. □

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MEL BOCHNER

1940-2025

JEFFREY WEISS



I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE to begin these reflections by explaining that Mel Bochner and I were close friends, making this admission “in the interest of full disclosure.” But then I found myself entangled in a familiar trap: Mel would have had little use for the rhetoric of *full disclosure*, because there really is no such thing. And he would have disparaged the pretense of critical distance as at best a vain conceit that “full disclosure” can only pretend to waive.

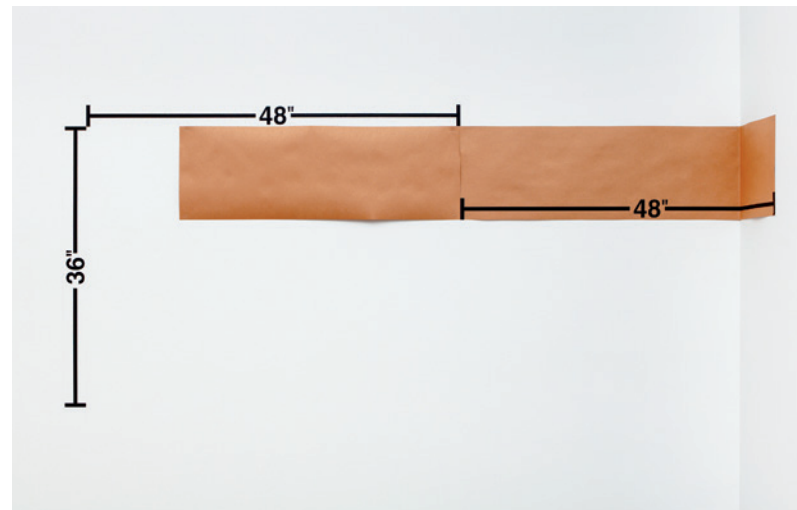
So be it. The occasion of Bochner’s death is no time to consider bracketing out the personal dimension that conditions any reflection on matters critical and historical. My rhetorical tap dance would have amused him, and laughing was one of his preferred pastimes. It was also a key element in his work, even as the work’s humor amounts to (quoting Vladimir Nabokov, one of his favorite writers) laughter in the dark—about which more shortly.

Bochner is often thought of as having been as much a critic as a visual artist, and his corpus of writings—collected in a single 2008 volume by MIT Press—is significant. As a writer he is best known for his early long-form essays and exhibition reviews, such as “The Serial Attitude” (1967) and “Excerpts from Speculation (1967–70)” (1970), both first published in these pages. In those key texts he set out to identify and unpack the implications of the new art—the work both of older artists, including Dan Flavin, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, and Robert Rauschenberg, and of his own contemporaries, such as Hanne Darboven, Jan Dibbets, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Dorothea Rockburne, Robert Ryman, and Robert Smithson. The publications are defining statements of the era. Taken together they read like a kind of game plan for his own work.

But Bochner’s work was not predetermined in that way. The two things, writing and artmaking, were simultaneous. His early writing—often brilliant and, given his youth, boldly self-possessed, sometimes to a fault—is driven by certainty. Yet his aesthetic practice was motivated less by rulemaking than by curiosity and wit. Criticality took the form of a pointed awareness of conventions: the historical conventions of artmaking, which Bochner subjected to various forms of critique; and conventional forms of signification, above all language and number. This includes what had already become the assumptions and habits of Minimalism, his chief foil for a time.

Often called a pioneer of Conceptual art, Bochner rejected the rubric, claiming it implied a false choice between object and idea. In his practice, concrete means were fundamental. His “Conceptualist” output of the late 1960s and early ’70s is composed of photographs, mechanical drawings on graph paper, inscriptions on note cards, pebbles arranged in chalk circles on the floor, powdered pigment or brown paper—the latter affixed with vinyl Letraset numbers and letters—applied directly to the walls of a room. There can be no *aesthetics* of the “Conceptual” without physical/material form, through which language, measurement, counting, and other ordering principles demonstrate or articulate our apprehension of the world. The early work represents an art-historical intervention, for which the term *Conceptualism* was, and remains, convenient shorthand: a suspension of the familiar identity of an artwork. In that they are both actual and abstract, the works, especially the installations, can be powerful, gorgeous, and strange.

Nor does analytical certainty inhabit the deep structure of Bochner’s work. Rather, he defined his practice through the exercise of contradiction and doubt. Consider the language Bochner used for titles. In some, the conceit of rational or empirical investigation is coupled with a principle that resists being accounted for in that way: axioms of *indifference* or *exhaustion*; rules of *inference*; principles of *detachment*; properties of *between*. Other words and phrases signify the provisional, the unknowable, and the uncertain: *counting alternatives*; *misunderstandings*; *no vantage point*. In *Measurement Room* and *48" Standards*, both 1969, it is with mock faith that the two factors—measurement and standard—are invoked. And in *Theory of Boundaries*, 1969–70, each of four squares arranged across a single wall is inscribed with prepositions, arranged in the form of what Bochner

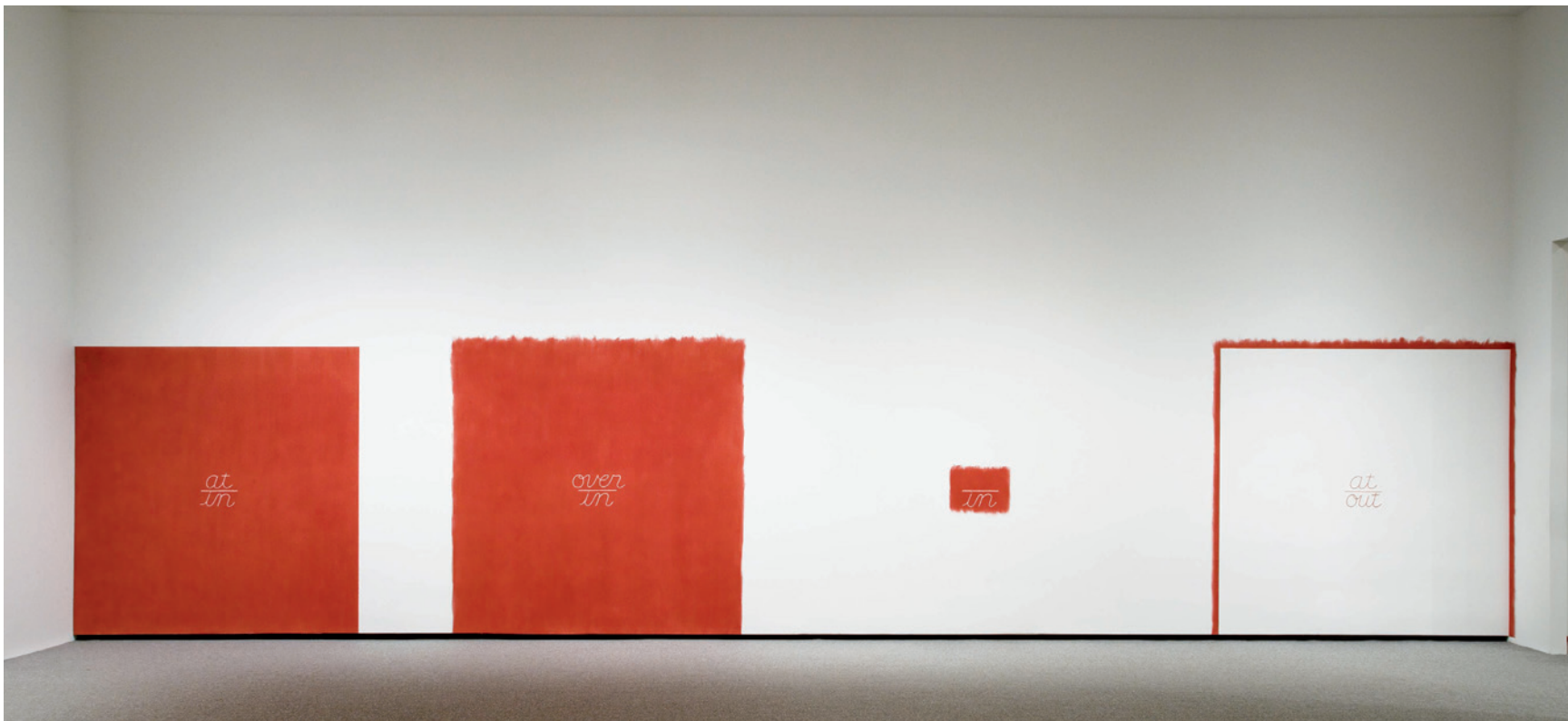


Opposite page: Mel Bochner in his studio, Southold, NY, 2022. Photo: Sébastien Pluot.

Above: Mel Bochner, *48" Standards (#27)*, 1969, brown paper, staples, vinyl, 38¾ × 98¾".

Below: Mel Bochner, *Measurement: Plant*, 1969, live plant, tape and Letraset on wall, dimensions variable.





Often called a pioneer of Conceptual art, Bochner rejected the rubric, claiming it implied a false choice between object and idea. In his practice, concrete means were fundamental.

called a *language fraction*, which describes the way the square contains (or fails to contain) the dry red pigment with which it is formed: *at/in*, *over/in*, */in*, and *at/out*—prepositions being words that refer to the relation between or among things rather than to things themselves. In what was arguably his first important work, the exhibition “Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art,” mounted in 1966 at Manhattan’s School of Visual Arts, Bochner showed ring binders containing Xerox copies of sketches, diagrams, and the like that he had solicited for the show from artists, composers, and others. The very title of the exhibition, the first Conceptualist project to use photocopy as a medium, signals a deliberate equivocation over nothing less than the ontology of the art object.

The same strategic doubt applies to painting per se—the medium that was paramount for Bochner, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. Importantly, his final decades were largely devoted to paintings on canvas, works specifically concerned with language. Among them are the thesaurus paintings, above all, and painted inscriptions of utterances—of slogans, so-called exasperations, and clichés, including the expression *blah blah blah*, which reduces language to mere sound. In an important 1993 interview with the artist, James Meyer challenged Bochner to account for his mid-career turn to painting, by then, in certain circles, a much-maligned practice—indeed, the very thing that, purportedly, he and others of his generation were originally determined to disavow. Bochner explained that, in fact, painting had been his object of investigation all along. “Without the history of the practice of painting as the background for all my work,” he said, “it becomes a series

of disparate gestures.” It was painting as a long-running system of “functions and meanings” to which his attention had been drawn.

I have always resisted the sweeping breadth of this defensive claim, but I can attest to a centrality for painting. By the time I was paying regular visits, Bochner’s studio was first and foremost a painter’s studio. And in our conversations over twenty years, painting was the topic to which we most often returned, including painters of the past—Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol, among others. It was, I think, Newman’s paintings that had meant the most to his early work. (Bochner actually occupied Newman’s studio on White Street for a time after Newman’s death in 1970. When moving out, he took Newman’s rotary phone and managed to have the artist’s telephone number reassigned to himself.) During the early ’60s, Bochner studied painting at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where he was born and raised, receiving a BFA. He felt he owed as much or more to his father, a professional sign painter. Bochner described himself as having been his father’s de facto apprentice for a time, and the relevance of this experience to his interest not just in the craft of painting but in painted letters—painted *words*—can safely be taken at face value. Even so, though Bochner was not trained in the history of art, he was an ardent student of painting since the Renaissance. I don’t think I am diminishing his critical investigation of the conventions of painting when I say that it was conditioned by his clear passion for painting on its own material, formal, and historical terms. When I listened to Bochner speak of painting, the sheer pleasure it gave him



Opposite page: Mel Bochner, *Theory of Boundaries*, 1969–70, chalk on dry pigment on wall. Installation view, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2007. Photo: Lee Ewing.

Left: Mel Bochner, *Portrait of Eva Hesse*, 1966, ink on graph paper, 4 3/4 x 4 3/4".

Below: Mel Bochner, *Meaningless*, 2003, oil and acrylic on canvas, 45 x 60".

was palpable—the pleasure of being deeply engaged with a series of historical problems and moves to which his own work responded and therefore belonged.

In the thesaurus paintings, Bochner revived an early method—recourse to *Roget's Thesaurus* as a verbal stockpile—that he first took up in 1966 in a series of “portrait” drawings. The paintings contain synonyms of a given word arranged in rows, filling the surface from top to bottom and left to right—a precisely registered allover composition based on the form of the list. The words are evenly distributed; the letters are atomized—equal in size but subject to disrupted patterns of color and value and to an erratic relation of figure to ground. Unstable in legibility, the words ask that the painting be both read and beheld. Bochner also pursued this category of work in printmaking, collaborating with Two Palms Press on enormous monoprints, aggressive in character and experimental in technique, that tested the limits of the medium. The prints are, in effect, paintings produced with printmaking technology. I believe the print matrix (in Bochner’s case a thick layer of clear acrylic plastic laser-cut with letters and printed under enormous pressure using copious quantities of oozing oil paint) gave him a new working metaphor for the defeat of the relation of figure to ground—for painting as a relief-like fusion of medium and image within the surface of a delimited plane.

The thesaurus is as much a device as a source. Created by Peter Roget in the mid-nineteenth century and reinvented in the twentieth, it is arranged not alphabetically but according to “categories” of knowledge that take the form of “semantic ‘domains,’” in the words of Robert L. Chapman’s modern-era foreword to the book—a book that, as Bochner discovered, had now come to include obscenity and slang. A directory of lists, it categorizes eight “classes” of knowledge arranged according to a hierarchy of significance. Class One is Abstract Relations, subdivided by a series of instances: Existence, Relation, Quantity, Order, Number, Time, Change, Eventuality, Causation, and Power. Class Two is Space: Space in General, Dimensions, Structure, Form, and Motion. (Taken together these almost compose a thematic index of Bochner’s entire oeuvre.) Finally, then, the thesaurus is a closed field with implications that are vast in scope. It is also another field of slippage and doubt, because, as Bochner often observed, the words listed in a thesaurus are not interchangeable; there is no such thing as a true synonym. Moreover, as Chapman notes, “even near-synonymy will be seen to attenuate quite rapidly as one goes along the lines of association in one direction or another.”

That quality of attenuation influenced the role of the thesaurus as the template for a pictorial logic that obviates habits of composition and expressions of taste. To paraphrase Bochner, the thesaurus is not transparent. It was his referent, yet the paint-





It should be clear that Bochner's work was politically engaged, increasingly more so in recent years as America lurched toward autocracy.

ings' words and phrases—executed freehand, in the manner of sign painting—are not listed as they appear in Roget's book. Instead, they are selected and rearranged to form a narrative of gradual debasement: a semantic descent from the decorous to the vulgar, often ending with crude references to the body. The comic edge of Bochner's work partly derives from this downward pull of bodily functions and mortal flesh. In the painting *Meaningless*, 2003, for example, the words MEANINGLESS, SENSELESS, and IRRELEVANT eventually give way to BLATHER, BLABBER, BABBLE, then to DRIVEL and DROOL, and, finally, to BLAH-BLAH-BLAH. The painting *No*, 2009, begins with NO, NO WAY, NO HOW and finishes with FUCK OFF and DROP DEAD. Throughout the thesaurus series there is a recurrence of words in Yiddish, a language Bochner—whose parents were first-generation Jewish immigrants—was raised hearing at home. Yiddish was a token of identity for the artist, who characterized it as filled with “intensive self criticism and moral invective.” But his use of Yiddish also corresponds to his attraction to words that are freighted with figuration and are almost onomatopoeic in sound.

Bochner's *The Joys of Yiddish*, 2006/2013, is an enormous work composed of Yiddish words (in yellow against a black ground) that was first shown at public sites in Chicago and Paris then finally installed in Munich, on an entablature of the Nazi-era Haus der Kunst. In an interview with Andrea Lissoni about the work's appearance in Germany, Bochner cited author Georges Perec, who said, according to Bochner, “There is nothing in the world that can't be entered onto a list.” The citation is incomplete, and I presume Bochner inadvertently omitted the missing part. What Perec wrote in his 1982 essay “Think/Classify” is this: “There is something at once uplifting and terrifying about the idea that nothing in the world is so unique that it can't be entered on a list.” Perec was a member of OuLiPo (the name is a French acronym for the Workshop for Potential Literature), a group of writers and mathematicians whose work was produced against the grain of self-imposed restraints. A French-born Jewish writer of Polish descent, Perec saw his parents perish during World War II, his mother at Auschwitz. The essay concerns the classification of knowledge using categories and simple systems—letters and numbers—that result in forms of order that are often incomplete, arbitrary, or absurd. A sense of play threads its way through the text, but Perec's use of the word *terrifying* conjures ordering and list-making as a possibly dehumanizing act. More broadly, in the essay Perec's central question is: Do I think before I classify or do I classify before I think? Impossible to say, it would seem, and in this same way the thesaurus paintings display an epistemological conundrum that, in turn, occupied Bochner's practice from start to finish.

It should be clear that Bochner's work was politically engaged, increasingly more so in recent years as America lurched toward autocracy. Throughout his career, the propositional nature of his work—what art historian Yve-Alain Bois has called the province of *what if*—was transgressive, interrogating not only the ambiguities and contradictions that lurk within systems of logic, measure, and symbolic representation but also the way those systems both shape and are shaped by values, certitudes, presumptions, and blind faith. “The elimination of doubt by method” leads to solipsism, he told Meyer. Elsewhere, put differently: “Either art is the site of a philosophical investigation which is relevant to human experience or it is nothing.” □

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Opposite page: Mel Bochner, *Blah, Blah, Blah*, 2023, monoprint in oil with collage, engraving, and embossment, 87 × 93”.

Above: Mel Bochner, *The Joys of Yiddish*, 2006/2013, aluminum panels. Installation view, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2023. Photo: Maximilian Geuter.

Below: Mel Bochner, *Villa Sciarra*, Rome, 1985. Photo: Lizbeth Marano.



BACHELOR MACHINE

JAMES MEYER ON GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE AT THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS

Gustave Caillebotte, *Rue de Paris, Temps de pluie* (Paris Street, Rainy Day), 1877, oil on canvas, 83% x 108 3/4".

Opposite page: Martial Caillebotte, *Gustave Caillebotte et Bergère sur la place du Carrousel*, février 1892 (Gustave Caillebotte and Bergère on the place du Carrousel, February 1892), silver chloride print, 6 x 4 1/8".



A **PHOTOGRAPH** of Gustave Caillebotte taken by his brother Martial shows the painter walking in the place du Carrousel in Paris on a winter day. Smartly dressed in black top-coat and hat, a leash dangling in his left hand, Caillebotte looks down at the cobblestone pavement at his sheepdog, who awaits its master's next move. Aged forty-two, Caillebotte is here a picture of bourgeois well-being and vitality, exuding masculine confidence and self-possession. Yet only three years later he would be dead, having collapsed suddenly in his garden at Petit Gennevilliers, mourned by his family and friends. So who was this gentleman with a dog, this “man in full” captured by Martial's lens? Why does he inspire such fascination?



Painter, exhibition organizer, collector, gardener, competitive sailor: Caillebotte unsettles conventional definitions of the figure of the artist. The well-to-do son of a *rentier* (landlord) who made his fortune as a manufacturer of army supplies, Caillebotte became known to art history as the impresario of Impressionist shows and the donor of a major bequest of works by his peers notoriously rejected by the Louvre and now held by the Musée d'Orsay, the first venue of this fascinating exhibition. (The show is on view at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, where it is presented under the title “Gustave Caillebotte: Painting Men,” through May 25.) Lacking the once-in-a-century talent of Monet and Degas and less committed to the plein air approach of Monet, Pissarro, and Sisley that was so defining of the Impressionist aesthetic, Caillebotte was long perceived as a second-stringer, despite a prolific oeuvre dispelling any suggestion of dilettantism. His masterworks include *Raboteurs de parquet* (Floor Scrapers), 1875; *Rue de Paris, temps de pluie* (Paris Street, Rainy Day), 1877; and not a few paintings that radically reimagine a beholder's point of view, such as his depictions of the Boulevard Haussmann looking straight down and of rowers that bring the viewer into an imagined intimacy with these men. Whether due to his life of cosseted ease, his untimely death, or his exclusion from the early exhibitions of Impressionist art organized by the influential dealer Paul Durand-Ruel (whose conservative sensibility was ruffled by the painter's daring subject matter, the scholar Mary Morton suggested in a 2021 article), Caillebotte remained a relatively unsung figure until his rediscovery during the 1970s by Marie Berhaut and Kirk Varnedoe and by a distinguished cohort of feminist critics during the '90s, intrigued by the painter's fixation on male subjects. A 2011 exhibition on Caillebotte and Martial and a 2015–16 retrospective organized by Morton and George Shackleford further enhanced the artist's reputation.

It would seem that Caillebotte had gotten his due. Was another show necessary only ten years after the last? The answer, according to Scott Allan, Gloria Groom, and Paul Perrin, the show's curators, is yes, with the reason being that “men largely dominate Caillebotte's figure paintings.” Of the nearly 560 canvases the painter completed during his lifetime, one hundred depict men *exclusively*. A virtual panorama of late-nineteenth-century Parisian life, his paintings depict men of different classes engaged in a variety of activities, from the backbreaking work performed by the shirtless laborers in *Floor Scrapers* and the repainting of street facades depicted in *Peintres en bâtiments* (The House Painters), 1877, to the leisurely pursuits of upper-middle-class Frenchmen familiar to the artist, including strolling (*La place Saint-Augustin, temps brumeux* [The Place Saint-Augustin], 1878), reading (*Portrait d'homme [Édouard Dessommes]* [Portrait of Mr. E.D.], 1881), card playing (*Partie de bésigue* [The Bezique Game], ca. 1881), piano playing (*Jeune homme au piano* [Young Man Playing Piano], 1876), rowing (*Partie de bateau [Canotier au chapeau haut de forme]* [Boating Party], ca. 1877–78), swimming (*Baigneurs, bords de l'Yerres* [Bathing], 1878), fishing (*Pêche à la ligne* [Angling], 1878), and even bathing, a subject traditionally reserved for female models in nineteenth-century French painting (*Homme au bain* [Man at His Bath] and *Homme s'essuyant la jambe* [Man Drying His Leg], both 1884).

The walls of the Musée d'Orsay did not lie. The selection of works indeed revealed a preference for male subjects unique in a



Clockwise, from top left: Gustave Caillebotte, *Partie de bateau* (Boating Party), ca. 1877–78, oil on canvas, 35 ¼ × 46". Gustave Caillebotte, *Portrait de M. G.* (Portrait of Mr. G. [Gallo]), 1878, oil on canvas, 31 ½ × 25 ½". Gustave Caillebotte, *Partie de bésigue* (The Bezique Game), ca. 1881, oil on canvas, 49 ¾ × 65 ¼". Gustave Caillebotte, *Balcon* (Balcony), ca. 1880, oil on canvas, 27 ¾ × 24 ¾". Opposite page: View of "Gustave Caillebotte: Painting Men," 2024–25, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. From left: *Homme au bain* (Man at His Bath), 1884; *Nu au divan* (Nude on a Couch), ca. 1880. Photo: Allison Bellido.





movement typically associated with fetching representations of young women in sun-dappled gowns and bonnets and plump, rose-cheeked children. That Caillebotte painted men, if not *only* men, has been seen to suggest a desire *for* men, imputing to works like *Man at His Bath* a whiff of homoeroticism that the curators did not shy away from exploring in their wall texts and catalogue essays. This approach scandalized the pearl-clutching reviewer at *Le Figaro* who worried that the exhibit had been unduly influenced by an “American” obsession with gender and queer theory—ignoring the fact the show was conceived *at* the Musée d’Orsay and conveniently forgetting that the modern discourses of feminism and sexuality are heavily indebted to the pivotal contributions of such important French thinkers as Hélène Cixous, Michel Foucault, Guy Hocquenghem, and Luce Irigaray. The reputation of the debonair painter must be shielded from progressive zealotry. Caillebotte must not be queered.

The import of the intersecting themes of masculinity, male friendship, and same-sex desire in Caillebotte’s art is not easy to pin down, especially as almost nothing is known about the artist’s sexual orientation. Allan, Groom, and Perrin took a scrupulously historical approach: “The artist’s love and sex life, lived or imagined, totally escapes us,” they write, noting that Caillebotte surrounded himself with a coterie of unmarried men yet lived with a woman named Charlotte Berthier during his final decade and left her a handsome income. Instead of speculating about his sexuality, they explore what the scholar Julia Bernard identified as the “homosocial” character of Caillebotte’s imagery, a reference to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s foundational definition of that concept as the “potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual” relations. Inspired by René Girard’s theory of triangular desire, Sedgwick’s book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) examined literary texts that position a desired female as the love object pursued by two male subjects, a structure that admits the potential of sublimated same-sex desire in a society of heteronormative domination. Sedgwick’s theorization of a homosocial/sexual continuum affords permission to consider the many possible relations that might have transpired among Caillebotte and his male friends, and that may have inflected prevailing ideas of masculinity in late-nineteenth-century Paris, whether “virility,” with its highly prized attributes of military valor and sexual potency, or “inversion,” a psychiatric term advanced by the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot that, as the art historians André Dombrowski and Jonathan D. Katz explain, understood same-

sex desire as a mislocation of “a female soul in a male body and vice versa” (readers of Proust will recall how the aristocratic soldier Saint-Loup undergoes an “inversion,” abandoning his devoted wife for a manipulative younger man).

The exhibition itself construed Caillebotte’s career as a series of encounters with male subjects. The opening gallery, focusing on the Caillebotte family, included paintings of the artist’s brothers and the early masterwork *Déjeuner* (Luncheon), 1876, a depiction of an ordinary family meal. Martial père has just died. The artist’s mother, Céleste Daufresne, dressed in mourning clothes, is being served by an elderly butler. Caillebotte’s ill-fated younger brother René leans forward to slice a piece of meat. The elaborate silver and crystal serving dishes, goblets, and carafe disposed on the dining table establish a visual and psychological barrier between the family members, a feeling intensified, as art historian Michael Marrinan suggests, by the location of Caillebotte’s plate and knife at the extreme forefront of the canvas in the place once occupied by his father. Nearby, the superb *Young Man at His Window* showed René looking out at the city from his room, hands plunged into the pockets of his trousers, his back turned to the beholder. This convincing image of masculine self-possession is misleading: A label mentions that René, who never established a career and fell into debt, died for reasons unknown shortly after the work was completed.

Subsequent galleries explored other constructions of the masculine and male-to-male desire. From his gripping depiction of workers in to versions of *Floor Scrapers* to the bourgeois strollers in *Le pont de l’Europe* (The Europe Bridge), 1876—a work that has been interpreted as a possible cruising scene, with Caillebotte portraying himself stepping in front of a courtesan who has inconveniently blocked his view of a younger man—the painter treated the braided themes of gender, class, and urban life with increasing maturity. I was particularly moved by the room titled “*Célibataires*” (Bachelors), devoted to the social circle memorialized in *The Bezique Game*, a depiction of seven men, including Martial and their friend Maurice Brault, consumed in a fashionable card game. Many of the men represented in this work appeared in portraits of their own, such as the merchandise broker Richard Gallo and yachtsman Édouard Dessommes, who, like Caillebotte, remained unmarried.

Farther along, a gallery featured the paintings of the male bather and *Nu au divan* (Nude on a Couch), ca. 1880—Caillebotte’s only depiction of an unclothed female model—and a selection of pictures of rowers, kayakers, and swimmers produced at the family’s country retreat; collectively, these tipped the homosocial “continuum” traced in the exhibit toward the erotic. In the most suggestive of the boating pictures, striking points of view establish pictorial intimacy. The handsome rower in *Boating Party* is but a few feet away; a viewer can almost imagine their shoes touching his. In contrast to the explicitness of *Man at His Bath*, the eroticism of this picture is enhanced by the fact that the rower is *clothed*. A tight-fitting vest clings to his athletic torso. His trousers, bunched at the groin, invite one to imagine what lies beneath. His bow tie wants to be untied, his vest buttons unfastened, his top hat removed. He looks away—at his oar dipping into the water, perhaps. Beyond, two men in straw hats share a skiff, an image of blissful communion. Desire is precious, passing. We will never know what Caillebotte felt for his oarsman, or if his feelings were returned. We will never know who and how Caillebotte loved. It may be that his paintings are precisely structured to frustrate such speculation. And so we are compelled to look at them. At a time when rigid definitions of gender and sexuality have been destabilized, and allegations of a “crisis of masculinity” fuel the propaganda campaigns of right-wing politicians and authoritarian regimes, the art of this once devalued painter feels astonishingly relevant. □

“Gustave Caillebotte: Painting Men” is currently on view (through May 25) at the Getty Center, Los Angeles; travels to the Art Institute of Chicago, June 29–Oct. 5.

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QUOTATION MARKS

JAMES QUANDT ON GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE
AND JEAN-LUC GODARD

WHY DID JEAN-LUC GODARD reserve his homage to Gustave Caillebotte until the end of his career, given the filmmaker's longtime proclivity for citing nineteenth-century French art in his films, especially Caillebotte's precursor Courbet and his contemporaries Manet and Renoir? Over eight decades of filmmaking, Godard frequently deployed paintings in his compositions, from the Picasso in *All the Boys Are Called Patrick* (1957) and the multiple reproductions (of Ingres, Klee, Manet, Picasso, Renoir) in *Breathless* (1960) through the increasingly profuse citations from art history in his densely montaged late films. Along with Godard's many invocations of literature and music—the autodidact flaunting his erudition—the art-historical references, spanning the pre-Renaissance and the School of Paris (particularly Nicolas de Staël), serve as both thematic allusions and aesthetic objects from Godard's immense *musée imaginaire*. The director's exegetes, attempting to decode his every arcane reference, occasionally forget that he could feature artworks simply for his own aesthetic pleasure, as when he quoted in *La Chinoise* (1967) a psychedelic painting by Friedensreich Hundertwasser, which has commonly been misidentified as a Klimt.

In *The Image Book* (2018)—Godard's last film, if one excludes the few hobbled fragments that followed—the octogenarian director reduced his quota of paintings from the profligate display in his video compendium *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988–98) to a comparatively frugal selection of tableaux, ranging from Leonardo and Masaccio through Delacroix, Goya, and Manet to Derain and Kandinsky. Since Godard previously cited many of those artists in *Histoire(s)*, *Passion* (1982), and elsewhere, the brief shot of





Opposite page and above: Jean-Luc Godard, *Le livre d'image* (The Image Book), 2018, HD video, color, sound, 84 minutes. Artwork: Leonardo da Vinci, *Saint John the Baptist* (detail), 1513–16; Gustave Caillebotte, *Raboteurs de parquet* (Floor Scrapers), 1875. Below: Gustave Caillebotte, *Raboteurs de parquet* (Floor Scrapers), 1876, oil on canvas, 32¼ x 39⅞".



Caillebotte's *Raboteurs de parquet* (Floor Scrapers), 1875, stands out. The painting appears forty minutes into the film, positioned at approximately the halfway point, in a section dedicated to the subject of law, injustice, and imprisonment. Godard intones Isaiah 53:8 over the Caillebotte: "a man that justice has cut off from the living." The text introduces the next two shots, of Henry Fonda pacing in his prison cell in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1956), the film that elicited Godard's longest review as a critic for *Cahiers du Cinéma* and which he repeatedly extols in *Histoire(s)*.

It initially appears that Godard inserted the Caillebotte simply to fashion a visual rhyme: The precipitous pattern made by the scrapers' vertical grooves in the floorboards immediately echoes in the hatched shadows of the bars cast on the ground of Fonda's cell. However, as is often the case with Godard's citations, the inclusion of the painting also posits a network of connections, a reticulum of biographical associations and aesthetic affiliations, some revelatory, others merely inadvertent or coincidental, such as the painter's and the director's shared affinity for the tales of Guy de Maupassant. (*The Image Book* concludes with a long post-credit sequence from Max Ophüls's *Le plaisir* [1952], taken from Maupassant's short story "The Mask.") Was Godard aware, for instance, that the Caillebotte family home, including the artist's studio pictured in *Floor Scrapers*, was located on the same street, the rue de Miromesnil in Paris's exclusive eighth arrondissement, as the apartment where he and his bride-to-be Anne Wiazemsky temporarily lived



Above: Gustave Caillebotte, *Déjeuner (Luncheon)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 20½ × 29½".

Right: Gustave Caillebotte, *Jeune homme à sa fenêtre (Young Man at His Window)*, 1876, oil on canvas, 45¼ × 31⅞".

Opposite page, top: Two stills from Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle (Breathless)*, 1960, 35 mm, black-and-white, sound, 90 minutes. Patricia Franchini (Jean Seberg), Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo). Artwork, from left: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *La petite Irène (Little Irene)*, 1880; Pablo Picasso, *Les amoureux (The Lovers)*, 1923.

Opposite page, bottom: Two stills from Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise (The Chinese)*, 1967, 35 mm, color, sound, 95 minutes. Artwork, right: Friedensreich Hundertwasser, *End of Night*, 1966.

in the 1960s, and which served as the set for *La Chinoise*, its posh enclave turned Maoist reeducation camp? (Both painter and auteur were scions of immensely wealthy families.) Ironically, the three shirtless workers absorbed in their labor in *Floor Scrapers* represent the very proletarians whom, almost a century later, the fanatical youths in Godard's Maoist compound a few blocks away from the Caillebotte town house would naively imagine they could exhort to mass revolution with their slogans and little red books.

Unlike the many figures in Caillebotte's paintings who turn away from the viewer—the nude man vigorously toweling off after his bath; the artist's brother René staring out the open window of their family apartment into a sun-bleached street; a woman in a dark dress, framed by lace-trimmed curtains, idly gazing at the blanched expanse of the Hotel Canterbury across the way—the three scrapers are positioned frontally, though their features are somewhat obscured, particularly those of the two men on the right, who appear to be conversing, the wine bottle and glass perched nearby intensifying the aura of amity. With its tilted, plunging composition, the painting has a vertiginous energy missing from its 1876 successor of the same name, a more horizontal and comparatively becalmed treatment of a similar subject, though set in a different space.

The trio of scrapers are less individuals than avatars of labor, their symbolic function prefigured in *The Stone Breakers*, 1849, by Courbet, an artist Godard frequently invoked, as in Lemmy Caution's jokey salutation in *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, 1991, "Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!" over a shot of the painter's *La vague (The Wave)*, ca. 1869–70, and in the startling superimposition of Courbet's *L'Origin du monde (Origin of the World)*, 1866, atop an image from Satyajit Ray's *The World of Apu (1959)* in *Histoire(s)*.^{*} Though decried as crude, Courbet's monumental study of rural toil was accepted by the Salon, whereas Caillebotte's portrait



of urban workers—a relatively new subject at the time—their sweaty backs and inordinate arms glistening in diffused daylight, was accused of vulgar realism and rejected, despite its adherence to academic methods. (Émile Zola considered the painting's meticulous accuracy "bourgeois.") Caillebotte never submitted another painting to the Salon, dedicating himself instead to the annual Impressionists' exhibitions, which he later organized and supported with unstinting generosity.

In his late films, Godard indulged his penchant for distorting artworks through masking and cropping, iris effects, textual overlays, desaturation, and drastic recoloring—Fauvist chromatics to the fore—such as in the brief quotation of Manet's *Le balcon (The Balcony)*, 1868–69, just a few minutes before the appearance of *Floor Scrapers*. The Manet is almost unrecognizable as Godard isolates a single detail, Berthe Morisot's pensive face, which he then blows up to fill the screen and etiolates, adding touches of yellow and red and superimposing an all-caps text—

^{*} For an analysis of this provocative superimposition, see my "Songs of Sorrow: Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy," *Artforum*, May 2015, 348–53.



As is often the case with Godard's citations, the inclusion of the painting also posits a network of connections, a reticulum of biographical associations and aesthetic affiliations, some revelatory, others merely inadvertent or coincidental.





By making the motif of hands his governing motif, including those of Caillebotte’s . . . Godard emphasizes that his approach in this final film is artisanal.

JE SAIS A QUOI TU PENSES (I know what you’re thinking)—over the image. (Godard had a thing about knowing what was on the minds of Manet’s women; he placed the same phrase over a close-up of Manet’s *Nana*, 1877, in *Histoire[s]*.) *Floor Scrapers* turns up comparatively intact, though cropped on the left and right and darkened, the palette of the walls transformed from Caillebotte’s cream and gold into shimmering indigo. No text obscures the composition.

While Caillebotte intended *Floor Scrapers* as a formidable debut to launch his reputation, Godard crafted his concluding work as a vast memento mori, full of last rites and final things, from the closing lines of Robert Bresson’s *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), in which the curé expiring from cancer declares that “all is Grace,” to that post-credit coda of the Ophüls film, in which an old man seems to dance himself to death. Godard intercuts these *vanitas* with several clips from films

that span his career, as if imminent mortality led him to muse upon his past attainment. By the time of *The Image Book*, the director had become what Edward Said called a “lamenting personality.” Perhaps the aged maker of elegies and requiems included the portrait of the floor scrapers as a fond reminder of the fraternity he had once enjoyed in the nascent Nouvelle Vague. Like Caillebotte, who purchased his Impressionist colleagues’ paintings for posterity and selflessly promoted their work, Godard initially supported his New Wave comrades as a critic, and extended assistance to such emerging directors as Jean Eustache and Jacques Rozier.

Caillebotte repeatedly trained his painter’s eye on workers, including the family butler, gardeners, housepainters, and floor scrapers. The emphasis on manual labor manifests in an intent focus on the hands, even in Caillebotte’s family portraits of bourgeois leisure: the hands of his brother Martial at the piano accorded

prominence by their reflection in the emblem of the Érard he is playing, or those of their dissolute sibling René, his splayed fingers tensed against knife and fork as he rudely begins his meal before his mother has been served in *Déjeuner* (Luncheon), 1876. The many studies for *Floor Scrapers* include one that concentrates on various positions of the workers' hands. More than one critic has suggested that the painting's materiality, apparent in the trompe l'oeil piles of shavings and in the workers' conspicuous instruments—chisel, plane, hammer—and its palpable sense of exertion became for Caillebotte an allegory of identification, the scrapers' labor representing his own struggle, his own concerted *work* with his hands (see, for example, *Autoportrait au chevalet* [Self-Portrait with Easel], 1879–80), to become an artist.

“Man's true condition: to think with his hands,” Godard pronounces early on in *The Image Book*, echoing the writer Denis de Rougemont. He opens the film with a montage of said extremities, beginning with an alabaster digit pointing heavenward from a detail of Leonardo's last painting, *Saint John the Baptist*, 1513–16, which became the film's signature image; continues with a shot of the attenuated fingers of a Giacometti sculpture, a salute to a fellow Swiss artist; and finally rests on an extended close-up of a filmmaker's hands working at an editing console—Woody Allen's from his cameo appearance at the end of Godard's *King Lear* (1987). (The image inadvertently introduces an intertextual reference to Caillebotte in that an art historian lauds the painter as “underrated” in a tour of

Paris's Musée de l'Orangerie in Allen's *Midnight in Paris*, 2011.) *Book* “really started when I thought of the five fingers,” Godard suggested, noting, “I said to myself: ‘We'll make a film where there are five fingers and then what the five fingers make together is the hand.’” By making the motif of hands his governing motif, including those of Caillebotte's scrapers, which the painter so carefully studied and meticulously rendered, Godard emphasizes that his approach in this final film is artisanal, the lone maker laboring over his handmade image book in his Helvetian retreat. As the film's coproducer Fabrice Aragno described Godard's arduous compilation process: “Just because the technology is primitive doesn't mean that he doesn't get exactly what he wants. It's like a painter wanting to keep the evidence of the brushstroke.”

In their later years, Caillebotte and Godard both retired from the city that had been the central setting and subject of much of their art to rural sanctuaries—the painter to his property at the Seine-side Petit Gennevilliers, where he took up gardening and indulged his passion for yachting, the filmmaker to a green-shuttered house in Rolle, a hamlet on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland, a place so small, Godard once joked, that FedEx doesn't deliver there. Gustave Geffroy's comment upon Caillebotte's premature death, “He was master of his time, sure of tomorrow,” could also serve as an epitaph for Godard, who eventually determined that another day was not his due, and arranged to die by assisted suicide. □

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Opposite page: Jean-Luc Godard, *Allemagne année 90 neuf zéro* (Germany Year 90 Nine Zero), 1991, 35 mm, color, sound, 62 minutes. Artwork: Gustave Courbet, *La vague* (The Wave), 1869–70. Below: Jean-Luc Godard, *Le livre d'image* (The Image Book), 2018, HD video, color, sound, 84 minutes. Artwork: Édouard Manet, *Le balcon* (The Balcony) (detail), 1868–69.



PRESENT TENSE

ERIC CROSBY ON ART MUSEUMS AND THE RHETORIC OF RELEVANCE



Above: View of the 58th Carnegie International, 2022–23, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Mezzanine, from left: Mohammed Sami, *The Fountain I*, 2021; Thu Van Tran, *Colors of Grey*, 2022. Floor: Banu Cennetoğlu, *right?*, 2022. Photo: Sean Eaton. Opposite page, from top: Tony Cokes, *Pittsburgh.Isms*, 2022. Installation view, Pittsburgh. From the 58th Carnegie International. Photo: Max Cianci. View of the 2nd Carnegie International, 1897–98, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.

SITUATED THROUGHOUT Carnegie Museum of Art are survey kiosks intended to capture visitor feedback. We ask a standard set of questions to better understand demographics, staff effectiveness, the in-gallery experience, and so on. As the museum’s director, I review the survey responses every quarter, and they tell a consistent story: Our visitors want to have fun, spend time with friends and family, learn about art, and experience something new. The last question—“Is there anything we could have done to improve your experience?”—is where I turn first. There I hope to find guidance on how we might make the museum—and by extension art—play a more essential role in public life. And yet, it would seem from the answers that if we turned up the heat, lowered the cost of parking, and smiled more often, everything would be OK.

But everything is not OK. Museums are imperiled by acute financial, social, and ideological challenges. The bitter culture wars of our day are making matters

even worse. Responding to the precariousness of our moment, museums have reified the problem with an unfortunate watchword: *relevance*. The term caught fire during the pandemic as the *raison d’être* of museum workers and their professional associations. Now codified by the press, *relevance* forms the basis of today’s go-to crisis management discourse for cultural organizations seeking to prove their worth in a landscape of diminishing revenue and eroding trust.

Institutional rhetoric matters. The language we use on museum walls and websites and in visitor maps and annual reports has real-world effects. And increasingly, I feel our rhetoric fails to capture the complexity and consequence of our work, which at its best creates meaningful ways for humans *to be* in relation to art. *Relevance* is a particularly sticky word, one that lacks nuance. It tells us what is supposed to matter, not what really does. As a binary, it homogenizes the concerns of disparate publics, not to mention the ways that such publics value museums

as resources for use. *Relevance* is as blunt an instrument as the equally sticky pre-pandemic catchphrase *visitor engagement*, and we would be wise to recognize that the two are close cousins if we want to escape our current bind.

Since the 2008 global economic downturn, our under-resourced museums, no longer buoyed by onetime blockbuster exhibitions, have come to rely more on revenue generated by repeat visitation. However, to “experience economy” consumers motivated by the next big attraction, permanent-collection displays and niche special exhibitions can be hard sells. So-called visitor engagement strategies offered museum professionals the promise of new ways to refresh their offerings and capture untapped revenue. Gallery response stations, hands-on activities, family-friendly wall labels, immersive digital experiences, and other branded novelties were thought to animate otherwise static presentations. If such strategies—accessories to the art itself—were to effectively increase visitors’ levels of engagement, surely they would return with their wallets. The problem with this principle was and continues to be that it presumes a museumgoing audience *needs* whatever the museum defines as “engagement” and that art itself is ill-equipped to provide it. It is as if crossing the threshold of a museum and having one’s own experience—in one’s own body, on one’s own terms—somehow represents for the industry an insufficient level of interaction to sustain consumer loyalty.

Fast-forward to March 2020. The Covid-19 shutdown made in-person museum visits impossible. Earned revenue plummeted, and the promise of visitor engagement collapsed. The American museum was in crisis: Could institutions effectively engage an audience with a couple of Zoom programs a month and a steady feed of “social content”? The answer was an emphatic no, even though the many regional and national surveys conducted during the period showed that patrons appreciated the effort. The crisis of visitor engagement was further exacerbated by the rapid succession of institutional critiques posed by the Black Lives Matter movement, highly visible staff unionization efforts, social media takedowns of institutional virtue signaling, and organized efforts to decolonize cultural organizations. Assuming a trip to the museum was even possible given the disruption of the pandemic, what imaginable benefit could existing “visitor engagement” tactics have for members of the public demanding answers to questions about deep-seated histories of systemic racism, dispossession, and inequity?

The field’s assumptions about visitor engagement now underlie the crisis of relevance we find our museums in today. By and large, we have addressed such questions of relevance with politically safe museum content and symbolic reforms, just as we addressed allegedly disengaged visitors with meager in-gallery novelties. It would seem to some that showing the work of Black artists could make a museum pertinent to the Black Lives Matter movement without necessitating an explicit expression of solidarity with that movement’s principles and demands. Could such exhibitions—and the carefully crafted social media messaging around them—make museums more relevant and hence financially sustainable? Judging by our actions over the past five years, museum leaders think the answer is yes, even if most also acknowledge that there is a long path ahead to redress the systemic issues at hand. Many of our museums have gestured toward operational reform through the creation of new diversity officer roles, the implementation of implicit bias training, the establishment of staff-led coalitions and employee resource groups, and other corporatized DEI strategies. However, our field’s crisis of relevance will not simply be ameliorated by exhibition content and occupational infrastructure, just as disengaged museumgoers will not be reformed through trite strategies of visitor engagement. What is missing in the conversation is a fundamental examination of the language we use to describe our work, how it shapes our value systems and professional practices, and how it keeps us attached to deeply entrenched assumptions about what museums think people need.

The programmatic infrastructure of most art museums today is an inheritance of “edtech”-centered Boomer workplace administration. It is a “needs assessment”

organizational model that derives from post-1960s performance improvement discourse, and it perpetuates a damaging, paternalistic logic: If we could just find out what our visitors truly need, then we could devise ever-improving ways to give it to them directly. But human needs—even basic ones across multitudes, communities, and individuals—are always changing. What’s more, rarely do adults want their needs met without opportunities to exercise their own capacity to claim agency, assert preference, and set conditions for participation. Given the sheer complexity of defining needs that are always changing and publics who want what they want on their own terms, it is no wonder that museums, when designing “needs assessment”-based programs with their limited financial resources for evaluation, end up spinning their wheels, their efforts yielding employee fatigue and low return on investment.





Andrea Geyer, *Manifest (Banners/ Carnegie Pittsburgh)*, 2023, silver-foil appliqué on nylon. Installation view, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 2023. Photo: Sean Eaton.

What if, instead of assessing the “needs” of others to serve them better, museums simply started taking stock of their resources at hand, describing them with transparency to relevant publics, and encouraging their constituents to use them as *they* see fit? Our needs-assessment model is an inherited narrative that stems from a scarcity mindset. It asks, How might we best use as few resources as possible to meet specific, predetermined outcomes? On the other hand, a practice of resource assessment and sharing, even when resources are scarce, would operate from an abundance mindset. It could ask, What horizons of possibility for current and future use might we draw from what is already at hand? As a museum director, I understand the impulse to zero in with laser focus on the scarce; after all, scarcity signals risk, and risk can threaten jobs. And yet, even as scarcity looms, we are surrounded by abundance of all kinds—vast collections of art and information, ample spaces for gathering, basic amenities for individuals and groups, kindness and goodwill, myriad knowledges and intelligences, individual politics and beliefs, boundless capacities for learning, new and existing relationships, curiosities and questions, and worlds of thinking, feeling, and being through art. Against the fraught backdrop of our culture wars, which museum will fare better: the museum that embraces the potential unknowns of abundance or the one that retreats into the anxious familiarity of scarcity?

Engineered engagement and manufactured relevance—which are in many ways part of the same discourse—have become integral to today’s museum business model. But they don’t have to be. We don’t need to subordinate human

many ways people choose art as integral to social life. A neighborhood museum is attuned to changes that are ambient and incremental, and it amplifies those changes that have the power to shift perceptions by rewriting museum-speak. There is no user manual to make a neighborhood museum; there are no best practices, only situational possibilities.

What if a museum’s curators upended the chronological nature of their permanent collection display and changed the name of its first gallery from “European and American Art, 1600–1850” to “What Brings Us Here?” Might the conversation between institution and its audience shift from the what, where, and when of collection objects to the who, how, and why of the museum itself?

What if a museum committed to a programmatic high point every four years, inviting international artists and curators into its historic spaces to explore ever-changing ways of being in practice with art and each other? Might the museum seize the opportunity to reinvent itself each time, reimagine its role in the world, and create lasting relationships that give form to contemporary art history?

What if programming staff began to turn their work inside out, transforming underused grounds into multiform outdoor spaces for performance by the region’s artists? What if that museum redirected its financial resources and marketing capacities to those artists and their publics directly? Might such a stage become a vital, lasting part of the city’s performing arts landscape?

What if educators initiated partnerships with local refugee resettlement agencies to make their museum available as a resource for art and artmaking to new residents?

What if, instead of assessing the “needs” of others to serve them better, museums simply started taking stock of their resources at hand, describing them with transparency to relevant publics, and encouraging their constituents to use them as *they* see fit?

agency to earned revenue: We can uplift both. Social litmus tests with symbolic content and interactive experiments in engagement psychology are not the solution. People are. What if we resist the watchwords of our day and ground our work in human flourishing? What if our daily admissions numbers stop representing business trends and start representing real people? What if the perspectives, languages, histories, emotions, and politics of our staff and visitors are not problems to be fixed but rather answers to our problems? What if everyone already has everything they need to experience and appreciate art? What if every respectful visit to a museum is worthy of respect? In short, what if we assume that those who visit museums are very much alive and *present*, standing in their own agency and intention?

To open our perspective, we need to start acting less like local institutions with global aspirations and more like global institutions with local aspirations. We need to start thinking like *neighborhood museums*. This is true for the largest metropolitan museums among us, too. A neighborhood museum is an essential and generative art resource for overall well-being for both individuals and communities. It invites positive social functioning, fosters connections between creativity and life purpose, and lets the complexities of art unfold with affirmation and wonder. It doesn’t belabor assessing the “needs” of others and inferring how best to serve; rather, it commits to sharing what’s at hand with imagination and openness, and in doing so, it is sustained by exercising its capacity to support the

What if they started providing orientation information about the museum and its offerings in Arabic, Dari, Haitian Creole, Nepali, Pashto, Swahili, Ukrainian, and Uzbek? Might the museum’s new neighbors choose it as a place to learn about their new city and share where they have come from?

What if a museum stopped assuming its older patrons cared only about benches in galleries and art history lectures? What if it started responding to our society’s alarming statistics about depression and loneliness among the elderly with a weekly array of drop-in activities that leverage the museum’s abundant capacity to foster human connection through art? Might friendships be forged, lovers meet, minds expand, and bodies be refreshed?

Relevance and engagement are the default low bars of a satisfying life in relation to art. In museum practice, they are top-down technocratic concepts that foreclose on opportunities for our best work. And such opportunities are abundant even when resources are scarce. Shouldn’t we aspire to more than hovering somewhere above irrelevance and disengagement? For that we would need entirely new watchwords. I propose *imagination* and *possibility*, *aspiration* and *abundance*. These can be the lodestars for our new, more emotionally available museum—a museum that allows people *to be*. Call a staff meeting, write these words on a whiteboard, sit in the discomfort of momentary silence, then just listen, and see what flourishes. □

ERIC CROSBY IS THE HENRY J. HEINZ II DIRECTOR OF CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART AND VICE PRESIDENT OF CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH.

PORTFOLIO: RICHARD FOREMAN

ANDREW LAMPERT

Opposite page: Richard Foreman in his SoHo apartment, New York, 2024. Photo: Andrew Lampert.

Page 106: Newspaper clipping showing Richard Foreman as Theseus in an undergraduate performance of Robinson Jeffers's *The Cretan Woman*, ca. 1955–59, Brown University, Providence, RI.

Page 107: A valentine Richard Foreman made for his wife Kate Manheim, date unknown, SoHo, New York, 2025. Photo: Andrew Lampert.

Page 108: Richard Foreman model, possibly for *Idiot Savant*, ca. 2009. Photo: Andrew Lampert.

Page 109: A bookshelf in Richard Foreman's apartment, SoHo, New York, 2025. Photo: Andrew Lampert.

Page 110, clockwise, from top left: A valentine Richard Foreman made for his wife, Kate Manheim, date unknown, SoHo, New York, 2025. Photo: Andrew Lampert. Richard Foreman note card, date unknown. Figure from a Richard Foreman stage maquette, ca. 2000s. Photo: Andrew Lampert. Richard Foreman note card, date unknown.

Page 111: Richard Foreman sketch, December 2024.

Page 112: Richard Foreman poster sketch for his 1979 *Luogo + Bersaglio*, date unknown.

Page 113: Page from Richard Foreman's unpublished manuscript for *Theory 2*, date unknown.

*I am probably the most radical artist to have ever come from Scarsdale.**

—Richard Foreman

I WAS TEMPTED TO NOT WRITE THIS ARTICLE. Starting is always the hardest part.

Google “Richard Foreman” and one of your first hits will invariably be the treasured playwright and director’s *New York Times* obit, which lists a cavalcade of prestigious awards as calculable proof of both his profound significance and old-school avant-garde don’t-give-’em-what-they-want bona fides. The first search page will inevitably include a link to Ontological.com, homepage of the Ontological-Hysteric Theater, the company Foreman established in 1968 to stage *Angelface*, his first produced play, at Jonas Mekas’s Film-Makers’ Cinematheque in New York. While the site could use updating, it contains info galore on the eighty shows that Foreman wrote and directed himself or staged by other authors; the films and videos he sporadically created; and the numerous books he published, including scripts, manifestos, essays, and one 1997 novel, *No-body*. The transcribed “note-books” section of the site features more than fifty downloadable files of free-floating dialogue that he offered up for others to use in their own productions. Not enough? You should visit the Foreman page at the PennSound website, a virtual trove of performance documentation, interviews, readings, and even the sound loops from his 2001 show *Now That Communism Is Dead My Life Feels Empty!* Too much? You could simply skim Foreman’s bountiful Wikipedia page, given that I just corrected it. Someone had named the artist Kate Manheim—Foreman’s remarkable widow, who for many years was his star actress—as being his first wife. She was his second. The brilliant film critic Amy Taubin preceded her. Now you know!

Foreman departed our 2025 reality in early January, at age eighty-seven. His last few weeks were spent in an intensive care unit, mostly asleep. A small group of friends and colleagues visited him daily, providing words and company and sometimes a little music. But they were never sure if he could hear any of it, and slightly uncertain whether he actually wanted them there in the first place. Socially aloof—not really the kind of guy who checks in to see how you’re doing—Foreman in falling into a coma may have at last arrived to the place he always desired to be: floating in the purely interior landscape of his unrelenting deep thoughts. He spent decades creating unparalleled plays that single-mindedly dared to penetrate this psychic threshold with their sense-stimulating, trancelike discombobulation. It could very well be that the only thing holding him back from achieving unadulter-

ated cognitive deliverance was, and had always been, his body. The actual moment of his passing was so tranquil that it seemed almost un-Foremanlike.

I am stalling again.

As a delay tactic, this would be an ideal place to quote one of the many devotees who have written so eloquently about Foreman’s work in their substantial books and essays. I am a blood-oath member of a vigorous cult who vigilantly believe Foreman was one of the most extraordinary artists of the past century—or this millennium—in theater or any other medium. Like me, those ardent followers probably struggled to convey what the visceral experience of a Foreman production felt like. Regularly staged behind large Plexiglas sheets that forced the audience to watch reflections of themselves perceiving the show, the plays had mesmerizing ways of generating momentary amnesia in viewers. It was far more than just spacing out. Lacking an apparent story or discernible narrative, your eye/mind/attention/consciousness (yes, all of these things, all at once) were left to track the taut zebra strings traversing the prop-laden set. You could also get lost attempting to read the splintered English and Hebrew letters running atop a stage festooned with wacko props and occult imagery. Foreman designed every detail of his productions with sketches and hot-glued maquettes that he remade as many as twelve times for any given show. Considering the Kabbalistic dollhouse sensibility of his sets, it makes a certain sense that he treated his actors like automatons. Performers intoned their fractured lines with peculiar patterns, rhythms, and elongated syllables, further separating words from definitions, questions from answers. The goal was to execute highly choreographed, ultra-precise movements, all while staring directly at the audience. Fingers exactly perched, every gesture laced with intention, his actors betrayed a motivation that bore no relation to the Method and had everything to do with, well, mystery.

What I meant when I said that Foreman’s theater caused amnesia was wrong and should have been edited out. I wanted to express that the plays have wavelike structures that oscillate between moments of relative stillness and fastidiously staged pandemonium. In a way, his works resembled tableaux vivants that would carefully stalk the stage for a little over an hour, questioning their own existence in space and time. His art trafficked in dense philosophical ideas, but you never had to actively analyze it to follow along. How could you, with all the buzzing sounds and blinding



lights aimed right in your face? The goal, as a viewer, was to absorb the barrage of stimuli and forgo active comprehension. It must be remembered that Foreman's work was primarily concerned with the goings-on inside his head—not yours. Here again comes that problem of requiring a body, and an audience, when all you need to make great art is a big throbbing brain.

Whether they were delighted or repelled by it, those who witnessed a Foreman play probably recognize what I'm inadequately trying to articulate. They comprehend the difficulty of describing the highly unorthodox brilliance of Foreman's theater to a noninitiate. As epiphanic as they are to read, his scripts don't provide much idea of how the elliptical actions and dialogue were staged. It is curious yet totally understandable that the most thrilling documentation of Foreman's oeuvre—via Paula Court's and Babette Mangolte's spellbinding photos, for instance, or the animated Super 8 shorts, shot one frame at a time by Kirk Winslow, available on PennSound—exquisitely fails to properly capture his work. The iconic, jaw-dropping images in his indispensable first book, *Richard Foreman: Plays and Manifestos* (1976), which rates a 9.3 or higher on the weirdness scale, cannot encapsulate the expansive range of what was once a piece of live theater. The photos and films are beautiful and potent because of their distinct compositional choices, yet it's important to remember that we're looking at *another* artist's work, not Foreman's. But, you know, that's life, isn't it? All you can do is wish you'd been there. Given the roughly 185 linear feet of materials that constitute the Richard Foreman and Kate Manheim Papers at New York University's Fales Library & Special Collections, you have ample opportunity to lose yourself in FOMO.

After many years of threatening to quit the theater, Foreman finally made good on his promise in 2013 with the last play he wrote and directed, *Old Fashioned Prostitutes*. Over the next decade he created a number of feature-length digital videos and spent time revising old texts; his theater days were truly in the past. He was busy thinking about other things. As saddening as it was to see him walk away from his life's pursuit, one could not help but respect his insurmountable indifference to it. What more did he need to do? Last year, while talking to Foreman about his writing, I commented that the meaning in his plays was often produced by the collision of two contradictory things. His response—a pretty tidy epitaph for his epic career—was, “I don't think of it as being contradictions. It just automatically happens. The idea is this: Once you get the idea, it falls apart. Step one is normally followed by step two, but that's too boring. So . . . do something different.” □

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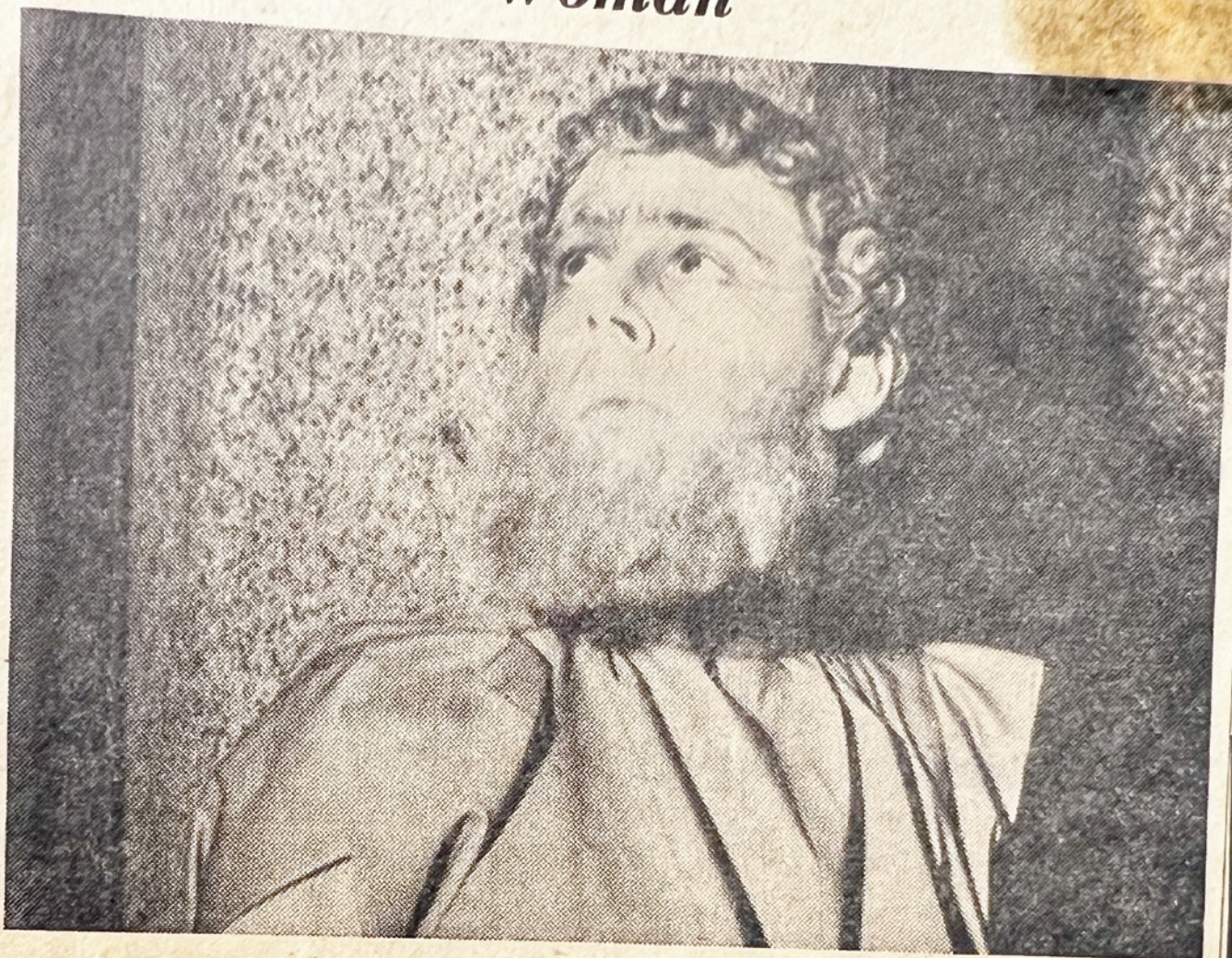
* Richard Foreman, in conversation with the author, 2024.

The book *Richard Foreman: No Title* (2025), edited by Andrew Lampert with an introduction by Jennifer Krasinski, is available now from the Further Reading Library.

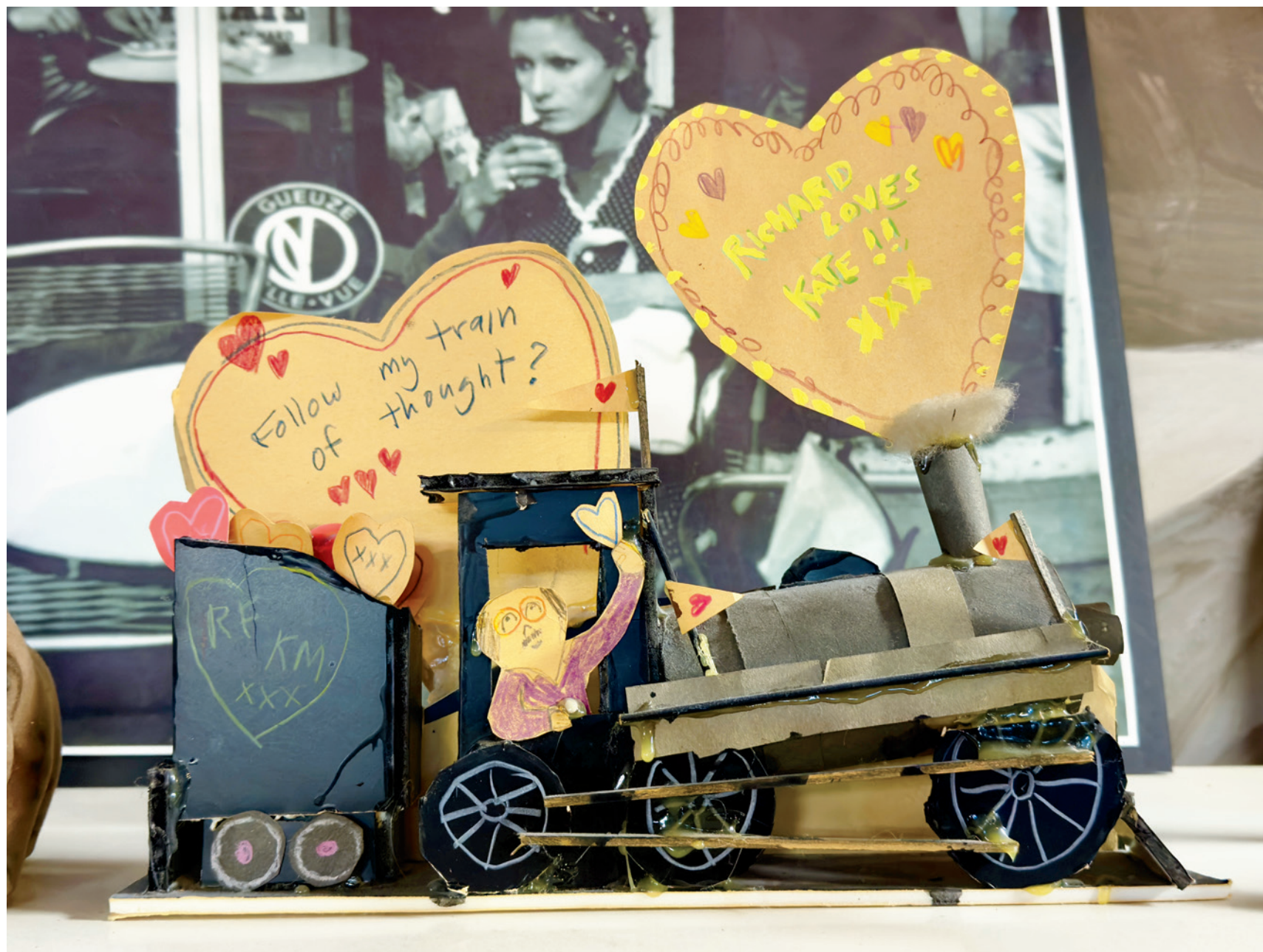
Foreman will be celebrated at this summer's Venice Theater Biennale (May 31–June 15), which is being organized by the event's artistic director, Willem Dafoe. The Wooster Group will present its re-vision of his 1988 play *Symphony of Rats*, and Dafoe will stage a performance of the Foreman text *No Title* with actress Simonetta Solder.

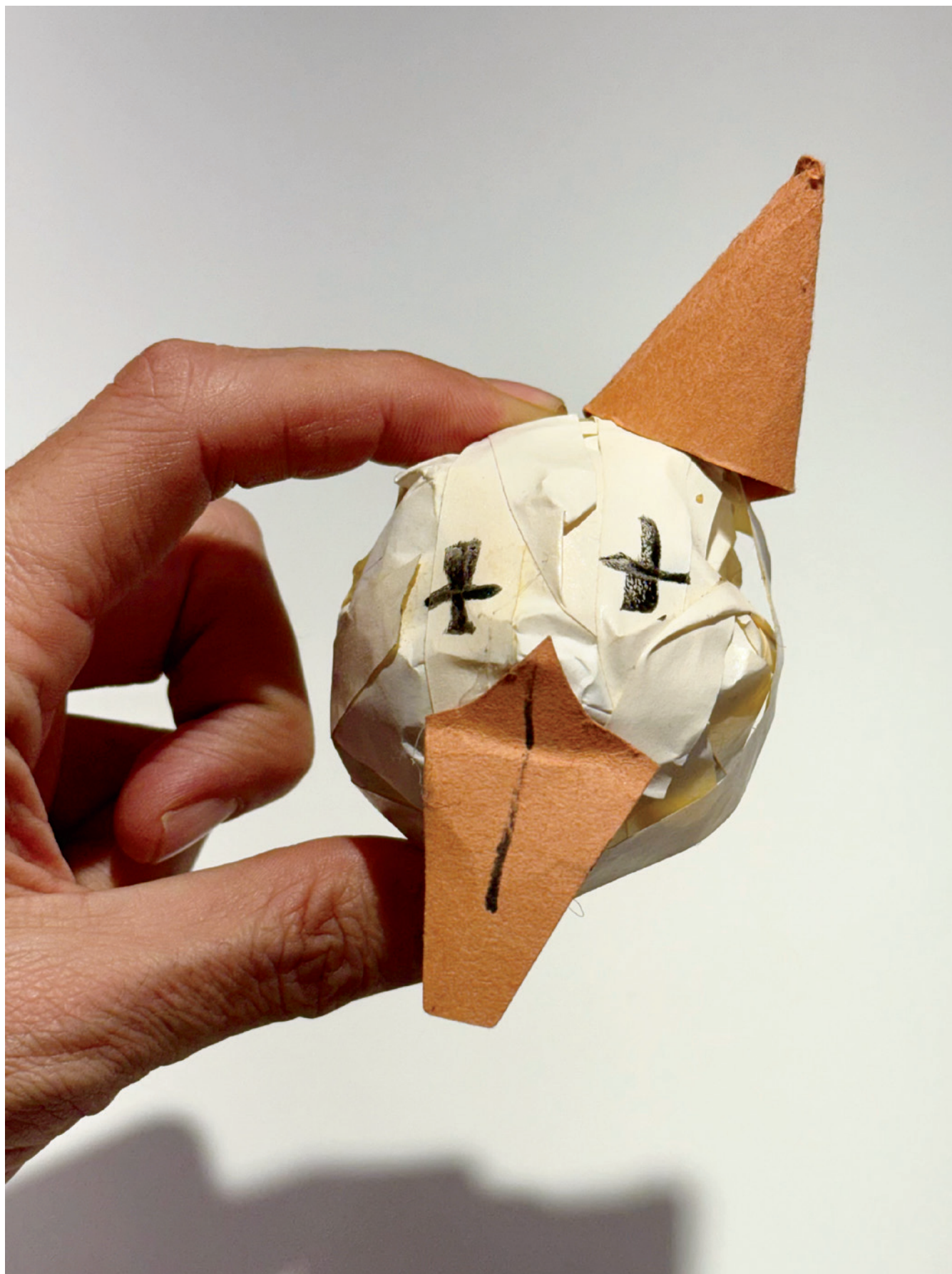
Two film and video series organized by Lampert—“His Head Was A Sledgehammer: Richard Foreman in Retrospect” and “Foreman's Favorites”—will be presented at Anthology Film Archives, New York, May 21–28 and May 29–June 9, respectively.

"The Cretan Woman"



RICHARD FOREMAN as Theseus plays a leading role in Sock and Buskin's current production of Robinson Jeffers' "The Cretan Woman". The triangle plot of the tragedy taken from Euripides' "Hippolytus" centers around Phaedra, played by Penny Ritter, Hippolytus, played by William Hudson, and Theseus. Theseus returns from the wars to be told that his wife, Phaedra, has been raped by his son, Hippolytus, and creates a situation which ends in tragedy.









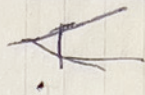
DON'T
FINISH
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YOU START

I am
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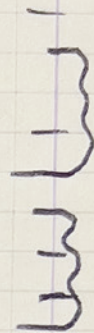
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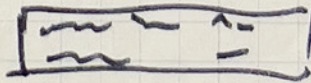




LUOGO +
Ber
LO



con Pymel
e con Pymel



**The grid on which my
experience may be charted is
not my experience**

**I want to make my play=
impenetrable, because
CONTRADICTION at every
moment**

**An impenetrable object = that
narcissistically loves itself = in
which everything that arises =
loves itself**

*what? / one - the not yet come
into existence, what still is "there"*

(not invisible, but not exist)

CLOSE-UP

BAGUS PANDEGA AND KEI IMAZU'S *ARTIFICIAL GREEN BY NATURE* *GREEN 4.0, 2024*

NAIMA MORELLI





Opposite page and below: Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu, *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0* (details), 2024, water-based paint on linen canvas, modular synthesizer, LED screen, PC, palm oil, dimensions variable. Above: Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu, *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0*, 2024, water-based paint on linen canvas, modular synthesizer, LED screen, PC, palm oil. Installation view, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. Photo: Arina Matvee.



DURING THE FOUR-MONTH RUN of the 2024 Bangkok Art Biennale, Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu's 2024 installation *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0* at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre cyclically generated and erased images of a lush Indonesian rainforest, like Penelope repeatedly weaving and unraveling her shroud. Atop a large green canvas painted by Imazu and based on a 1905 lithograph of the rainforest floor, a mechanical arm produced a sequence of line drawings depicting the contours of animals and plants. The drawing machine was programmed to render one of five images each day, in water-soluble ink. At the end of the week, the silhouettes were methodically erased by a second machine, which dripped water onto the canvas's surface and wiped it away with a brush. The process of erasure is driven by the biofeedback data produced by a living palm oil tree that took center stage in the installation, its condition determining the volume of water and the speed and direction of the brush. The drawing machine then takes over again, repeating the process anew.

As a result, the Biennale's visitors all would have seen a very different painting depending on what point in the cycle of the image's creation and destruction they visited. The slowness of the process is crucial: Because the work evolves and changes incrementally over an extended period of time, the piece was impossible to grasp in its totality, much as the forces contributing to the deterioration of the environment are difficult for us as humans to apprehend, which pushes us toward inaction or neglect. The installation is the fourth iteration of Imazu and Pandega's collaborative project "Artificial Green by Nature Green," which debuted in



Above: S. Sudjojono, *Jalan Lempeng (Straight Path)*, 1941, oil on canvas, 18½ × 25½".

Below: Arahmaiani, *Memory of Nature (Singapore)*, 2013. Performance view, Art Stage Singapore, 2013.

Opposite page: Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu, *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0 (detail)*, 2024, water-based paint on linen canvas, modular synthesizer, LED screen, PC, palm oil, dimensions variable.



The piece was impossible to grasp in its totality, much as the forces contributing to the deterioration of the environment are difficult for us as humans to apprehend, which pushes us toward inaction or neglect.

2019 and focuses on the palm oil industry in Indonesia. Between 2011 and 2016, palm oil production was responsible for the deforestation of more than two million hectares, accounting for nearly a quarter of the nation's forest loss. This rapid depletion, particularly prevalent in Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Papua, is leading to biodiversity collapse, habitat destruction, soil erosion, flooding, and compromised water systems.

In dialogue with this climate crisis, *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0* reimagines the act of plein air painting. We no longer have a human artist directly observing and capturing their immediate sensations and perceptions of the natural environment, mediated by their individual feelings, emotions, and imperfections. What we see instead is a landscape painting produced through a negotiation of inputs from humans, machines, and plants themselves: The impersonal hand of the machine is programmed to render nature drawings by Imazu, the rainforest scene's erasure directly tied to the health of the plant that serves as its living stand-in.

The ideology underlying Western landscape painting is one in which humans are stewards and masters of the natural realm, a view of nature as a resource to be exploited, first by colonial empires and now by extractive industry. In formerly colonized countries of the Global South like Indonesia, the genre of landscape painting and its politics of representation are even more fraught. In the 1940s, the Indonesian painter S. Sudjojono popularized the term *Mooi Indie* (Beautiful Indies) to describe the exoticist style of painting that developed in Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period, made primarily by Western artists for tourist audiences, but also by local artists themselves. Sudjojono, a profoundly political artist, criticized the romanticized, Orientalist representation of the Indonesian landscape as lush and peaceful, the misery of its population edited out.

Based in the Javanese city of Bandung, Imazu and Pandega began focusing on the subject of deforestation after Imazu moved to Indonesia in 2017, inspired by her surprise, as a native of Japan, at the Indonesian government's comparative indifference toward its own natural environment. In taking up this subject, their work resonates with an important current in contemporary Indonesian art exploring the intersection of nature and human intervention. Figures like the pioneering performance artist Arahmaiani have emphasized the ethical dimensions of our relationship with the environment, reminding us that without respect and stewardship, nature is reduced to mere resource exploitation. Others, such as painter Jumaldi Alf, have interrogated historical representations of the Indonesian landscape, revealing how colonial imaginaries shaped perceptions of an untouched paradise.

Ultimately, Imazu and Pandega don't advocate a return to a mythical preindustrial Eden, nor do they posit technology as inherently antagonistic to nature. Instead, with *Artificial Green by Nature Green 4.0*, they highlight this wrestling match between humans and nature, the former constantly trying to conquer its surroundings, the latter reclaiming humans for itself in turn, in a never-ending cycle of reconstruction and loss. □

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The Michael
Asher Lobby





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Michael Asher

ARTISTS SPACE, NEW YORK

CURATED BY JAY SANDERS AND STELLA CILMAN

Tom McDonough

MICHAEL ASHER worked in that space of barely discernible distinctions Duchamp liked to call the “infrathin”: the distinction, for example, between the thickness of a single magazine page and two glued together. When Tom Marioni launched *Vision* magazine in 1975 as an extension of his Museum of Conceptual Art by asking twenty-three fellow California artists to contribute two pages on their work, Asher specified that his two facing leaves be joined with adhesive, ensuring that he effectively disappeared between the Doug Wheeler drawing and Bruce Nauman text piece that bracketed his contribution. Looking back, Marioni would call Asher’s glued pages “invisible conceptual art,” with a nod toward the project’s ironic relation to the title of his new magazine. Asher may have created the only truly “original” work in *Vision*’s pages, a physical object rather than a reproduction, but its existence was conditional on erasing the artist himself from visibility.

A copy of this issue, opened so that Asher’s contribution stuck out prominently, was displayed on its own plinth in the artist’s survey at Artists Space, neatly encapsulating the paradox faced by any institution attempting to mount an Asher

exhibition after his death in 2012: Given the artist’s insistence on the spatial specificity and temporal delimitation of his work, there is in effect nothing left to see. Asher has disappeared, for all practical purposes, his deep influence on contemporary artistic production belied by the very impossibility of a posthumous retrospective. There are, however, decidedly physical remainders, such as this double-thick magazine page, whose stiffness is palpable when the reader thumbs through the issue. It could be considered an emblem of the show’s organizing principle as conceived by curators Jay Sanders and Stella Cilman: If Asher’s work has largely passed with him, one can still exhibit the residues left by his site-specific interventions. Occupying a liminal position—less than artworks but more than ephemera—these magazines, advertisements, radio works, publications, postcards, T-shirts, and the like take center stage here, offering a brilliant rereading of Asher’s strategies of choice, traced through twenty projects spanning some forty-five years. Even the infrathin, we discover, entails a visible margin of difference.

Asher’s reputation rests upon his temporary, site-specific interventions, which began in the later 1960s as alterations of museum and gallery spaces that questioned the status of sculpture as autonomous monolith and soon developed into a broader examination of the necessary interdependence of work and support, conceived in ever more comprehensive terms. These strategies have been historicized under the rubric of institutional critique, a framing that Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, one of the artist’s greatest critical champions, put into place some forty-five years ago when he wrote of Asher’s ephemeral deployment of materiality to resist the way exhibitions abstract artwork from history and freeze it into a

static, unchanging object as a form of “contextual dialectics.” Buchloh also produced the defining record of the artist’s achievement, *Michael Asher: Writings 1973–1983 on Works 1969–1979*, an anthology documenting a decade of his work. It is perhaps telling that only two of the projects represented at Artists Space also appear in this key text; if most postdate its publication, there is also a sense that Asher’s significance for us today extends beyond his canonical interventions into institutional space and might rather reside, as Andrea Fraser noted in a 2008 essay on the artist in these pages, in his rearticulation of artistic practice and “the symbolic and material economies in which it exists.”

Take the work Asher produced in 1983 for the lobby of the newly opened Temporary Contemporary, the interim home of Los Angeles’s Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) while its current Grand Avenue building was under construction. Having received the inaugural commission, Asher purchased licensing rights to this entrance space from the museum for a nominal sum, which he promptly sublicensed back to MOCA, an arrangement that lasted into spring 1985. During that time, a sign announcing “The Michael Asher Lobby” was installed on a column in the space, and business cards with a statement by Asher explaining the arrangement were made available at the admissions desk. He thereby reversed the roles of artist and patron, at least symbolically, while also using funds from the museum to subsidize the publication of

Asher has disappeared, for all practical purposes, his deep influence on contemporary artistic production belied by the very impossibility of a posthumous retrospective.



Buchloh's anthology. The signage, business card, and the book's dust jacket documenting this work were all on display at Artists Space, a reminder of a moment when MOCA's claim to be an "artists' museum" was literalized. (Today we are more likely to associate the Temporary Contemporary's building with the name of David Geffen, whose 1996 gift of \$5 million was recognized by renaming it the Geffen Contemporary.)

Asher's request that the "rental fee" for the lobby space be commensurate with typical costs for warehouse space in its Little Tokyo neighborhood suggests another aspect of his work highlighted at Artists Space: an engagement with questions of labor and its intersection with his own work as an artist. In 1976, for a group exhibition in Portland, Oregon, he secured airtime on a local television program—concurrent with that year's Super Bowl—and broadcast a static shot of the station's control room, revealing the normally hidden conditions of media production. It was shown at Artists Space as fourteen stills taken at regular intervals, a format Asher had settled upon when the work was exhibited as part of a group show in 2010. In the mid-'80s, while in discussions with the University of California, San Diego, regarding a public artwork, he took it upon himself to redesign the stationery of the commissioning program, the Stuart Collection, charging it a modest fee for time and materials; examples of the Asher-designed letterhead, business cards, and personalized notepaper were included here.

With such projects, Asher announced himself as the inheritor of a distinctly American trope: the artist as honest, ethical worker. Leo Steinberg first traced its outlines, from Thomas Eakins to Robert Morris, and his characterization of the latter's sculpture—"the work strips the adverb from the definition of art"—could apply equally to Asher's approach, even if we have moved from an ethics of the workshop to those of the white-collar office. The empty public lobby and the blank stationery are deeply emblematic in this context: The artist provides an open field for other voices to fill. That is as true of his famous post-studio seminar critiques at CalArts, where he taught for over three decades, as it is of his lesser-known work from 2000 to 2003 with high school students to reinstall artworks from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's permanent collection. Even the plainspoken quality of the installation at Artists Space reflected this; with its uncluttered layout, display platforms of unassuming engineered wood, and sparing use of Plexiglas bonnets, the show proposed a visual openness entirely congruent with Asher's own ethics of transparency.

At the entrance to the exhibition were two versions of checkers sets designed by Asher in the mid-'60s, when he was still an undergraduate arts major at the University of California, Irvine. The boards were store bought, but the checkers themselves were custom fabricated, one in steel, alternately chrome-plated or finished in black oxide (a set bought by Donald Judd on a trip to Los Angeles in 1966),



Opposite page: **Michael Asher, *Via Los Angeles* (detail), 1976**, fourteen stills from Asher's thirty-minute television program, ink-jet prints, each 8 × 10". This page, clockwise, from top: **Michael Asher, *No Title* (Checkers), 1965–66**, steel checkers plated with a chrome and black-oxide finish, powder-coated aluminum checkers, store-bought checkerboards. Installation view. Photo: Carter Seddon. **Michael Asher, *The Michael Asher Lobby* business cards**, ink on coated paper, unfolded 4 × 3½". ***Vision*, no. 1, September 1975**. Left page: Michael Asher contribution of two facing pages adhered together.



another in powder-coated aluminum. Perhaps, as James Welling recently speculated in a review of the Artists Space exhibition, the young Asher had witnessed Duchamp playing chess at the opening of his retrospective at the Pasadena Museum of Art (now the Norton Simon Museum) in 1963. But it is significant that when Asher designed these sets two years later, he turned away from Duchamp's passion for the "game of kings" toward what we might consider its more demotic American counterpart, checkers. Another infrathin distinction, but one with real consequences: away from strategy, toward ingenuity; away from metaphors of war, toward those of play. There was a democratic, open impulse already evident here, one that would never disappear from his work. And this, in the troubled fall and winter of 2024–25, when this exhibition was on view, may be Asher's greatest legacy

for our time. His work took shape during a moment in the later '60s when the widespread legitimization crisis that had been casting doubt on America's institutions reached the museum and the art world generally. He responded to leftist critiques of museum culture with a practice of generosity, lucidity, and egalitarianism. We look back on his work from another moment of institutional crisis, now driven primarily by a right-wing backlash against recent efforts to open museums, universities, performance spaces, and the like to an expanded range of voices and histories. Asher's example is more urgent, more bracing, and, thanks to Artists Space, more available than ever. □

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Anne Imhof

PARK AVENUE ARMORY, NEW YORK

CURATED BY KLAUS BIESENBACH

Rachel Wetzler

FOR TEN DAYS IN EARLY MARCH, the social media feeds of every New York art-world observer were glutted with hazy images of models and dancers in streetwear lounging atop showroom-ready Escalades parked inside the Park Avenue Armory’s cavernous Wade Thompson Drill Hall, all bathed in the eerie red light of a jumbotron’s ticking doomsday clock overhead. This compulsive stream of posts did not so much document as ritually complete Anne Imhof’s *DOOM: House of Hope*, the artist’s largest production since her Golden Lion-winning *Faust* at the 2017 Venice Biennale. Over the course of three hours, the sixty-odd-member cast moved through the space performing overlapping vignettes, trailed

by audience members whose mediated experience of the work was not merely tolerated but encouraged.

DOOM began with the audience pressed up against a metal barrier, creating conditions that threatened to turn the crowd into a scrum, each person jockeying for the best camera angle. (One couple shamelessly cut in front of me and a colleague on opening night, then offered, by way of an apology, “It’s immersive, so it doesn’t matter where you stand,” which at least turned out to be correct.) Suddenly, without warning or ceremony, the clock began its ominous countdown. Emerging from the foggy depths of the hall, the performers intoned, “We’re fucked, we’re dead, I think I made you up inside my head.” Then, with a scream, the gates opened, sending the audience streaming into the hall, decked out to evoke a high school gym, complete with a tinsel-strewn prom dance floor off to one side. To this quintessentially American setting, mythologized in Hollywood movies and on TV, Imhof adds another: the tailgate, evoked by a fleet of the gas-guzzling luxury SUVs preferred by bodyguards everywhere that here serve as scenic backdrops, props, and pedestals.

In place of the impediment to vision that served as *DOOM*’s opening salvo, we now get an overabundance of things to see, ultimately to similar effect: The lack of a fixed vantage or sequential structure means each viewer must choose her own

adventure through the work, leaving a nagging sense at every moment that there is something better happening elsewhere in the room. Artist/model Eliza Douglas, Imhof’s former partner and frequent collaborator, draws on her bare torso with black marker, shoves playing cards into her mouth, howls like a wolf; one performer tattoos the back of another; Berlin-based musician Arthur Tendeng, aka ATK44, raps in French and German; the ensemble shouts “I want discipline,” or skateboards. Even as the performance was unfolding in front of my eyes, I found myself pulled toward Instagram, not to post my own proof of attendance (though sure, that too), but to see what other attendees had posted, a collection of other, and therefore more alluring, views. The invitation to wander freely provides only an illusion of spectatorial empowerment: More than any stylistic affinities or personal and professional collaborative ties, what truly aligns Imhof’s work with the logic of the fashion industry is its sheer seductiveness, its tendency to manufacture out of thin air a desire that can never be fulfilled, undercutting even the most compelling moments by seeding anxiety about what is being missed.

***DOOM*'s foundational principle is that all art and culture today exists primarily as a pretext for content creation, a proposition that Imhof presents here, as in her previous works, as a morally neutral fact.**

DOOM's foundational principle is that all art and culture today exists primarily as a pretext for content creation, a proposition that Imhof presents here, as in her previous works, as a morally neutral fact. There is nothing particularly caustic or censorious about how *DOOM* induces its audience to post: At times, the artist herself hints at the advantages of the screen view over the live one, beaming iPhone footage taken of one performer by another up onto the jumbotron, offering a clearer, closer vantage than any of us could possibly get. (In the absence of a conventional backstage, Imhof and her performers also communicate via WhatsApp during performances.) At the same time, there is no pretense that the relentless production of personalized documentation offers an emancipatory or even transformative form of participation; as Imhof noted in an interview toward the end of *DOOM*'s run, the audiences at later performances seemed to be re-creating the images circulating on social media from previous nights as much as recording their own impressions, the "iconography" of the work both tailored to and shaped by the conventions of the mobile image. It is precisely this ambivalence toward the smartphone's total reorientation of contemporary existence that her champions find compelling and her detractors unforgivable.

For *Faust*, Imhof turned the neoclassical German pavilion, a relic of the Nazi regime, into a kind of

luxury display case for human bodies: Viewers waited on hours-long lines for the chance to look down through a glass floor at coolly sexy, eminently photogenic performers as they texted, vaped, masturbated, sang sad songs, and set little fires. There is a similar choreography of ennui at work in *DOOM*—not to mention a familiar star player in Douglas—only this time countered by exaggerated displays of virtuosity: a fouetté for every vacant stare.

Marginally less plotless than her previous productions, *DOOM* is ostensibly modeled after *Romeo and Juliet*, that archetypal tragedy of teen angst, only set in reverse: the doom of Verona's star-crossed lovers, thwarted by bad authority figures and failed attempts at communication, giving way to the tender hope of first love—at least according to interviews with the artist. In practice, recognizable Shakespearean snippets (the balcony scene, for instance)—their delivery alternately melodramatic and affectless in the manner of a high school drama club—are interspersed with less immediately identifiable quotations (textual and postural) drawn from works including George Balanchine's *Serenade*, 1934; Tino Sehgal's *Kiss*, 2003; Heinrich Heine's *Buch der Lieder*, 1827; and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Querelle*, 1982. I picked up on almost none of this until consulting the program roughly halfway through; even there, the list of "quoted sources" is printed in alphabetical order rather than by appearance. But limning the quoted passages from the ones created for this work by Imhof and her increasingly vast team of interdisciplinary collaborators is hardly necessary, since there is no discernible difference between how Imhof treats Arlene Croce and the

Doors, Shakespeare and Jeremih, Jerome Robbins and Bruce Nauman. Form and content are subordinated to style, the entire canon of Western art, literature, and music metabolized and assimilated into an overarching ambience. Whereas any number of artists of the past two decades have foregrounded the fragmentary, dissonant qualities of online life, portraying it as a relentless assault of incongruous audiovisual stimuli, Imhof reaches for cohesion, gathering her disparate citations into something more monumental. This, more than any of the superficial resemblances to the aesthetics of fascist coercion that critics have been quick to locate in her work, is where the real affinity between her project and that of the prewar return to order lies: the impulse to turn fragments into monuments.

Perhaps, then, I should have been less surprised by the third and final act, when *DOOM* suddenly becomes a night at the ballet, led by American Ballet Theatre principal dancers Devon Teuscher and Daniil Simkin. The latter features in one of the production's most thrillingly deranged talent mash-ups, the performance of a solo from the late choreographer John Cranko's 1965 ballet *Onegin* with live accompaniment by the nu metal band Korn's guitarist James "Munky" Shaffer. While this embrace of classical dance might be first and foremost a rejoinder to those who dismiss Imhof's performances as little more than hot young people standing around, I am tempted to read it more polemically as a defense of posing (and, in turn, posting), in its emphasis on the communicative potential of bodily disposition, whether it takes the form of a variation *en pointe* or a model's disaffected posture.

For many critics, this radiant ending redeemed the entire event, replacing the wan spectacle of impassive youth barely mustering revolt with artistry, mastery, *discipline*. In truth, I left underwhelmed by the work's sudden lurch toward sublimation. *DOOM*'s most electrifying moment arrived in its very first seconds, when the countdown clock first flashed on the screen above, a looming threat—or promise—of annihilation that never arrives. □

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Opposite page: Anne Imhof, *DOOM: House of Hope*, 2025. Performance view, Park Avenue Armory, New York, March 3, 2025. Below: Anne Imhof, *DOOM: House of Hope*, 2025. Performance view, Park Avenue Armory, New York, March 4, 2025. Center: Devon Teuscher. Right: Talia Ryder. Anne Imhof, *DOOM: House of Hope*, 2025. Performance view, Park Avenue Armory, New York, March 10, 2025. Standing and sitting, from left: Perla Haney-Jardine, Arthur Tendeng, Sihana Shalaj. Photos: Nadine Fraczkowski.



NEW YORK

American Artist

PIONEER WORKS

In a vitrine near the entrance to “Shaper of God,” American Artist’s solo exhibition at Pioneer Works, one encountered *Octavia E. Butler Papers: mssOEB 1-9062: Local Documents, 2025*, a group of pencil-on-paper tracings of items from the titular science-fiction writer’s archive at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. American Artist produced portraits of Butler based on her passport, driver’s license, and student ID card from high school. Her likeness, gleaming in graphite, was painstakingly rendered, as though by an obsessed fan—a sign that this show would trouble any conventional perceptions regarding research-based art. An accompanying set of drawings, *Octavia E. Butler Papers: mssOEB 1-9062: Maps, 2025*, featured reproductions of the author’s diagrams of imaginary places such as Acorn, a setting from her 1993–98 *Parable* series. At first glance, one could have mistaken Butler’s handwriting for that of American Artist’s—another clue that they were after more than just assorted biographical details about the late writer’s life.

In her 2020 book *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*, Legacy Russell characterized American Artist’s practice, down to their name, as “a durational performance that is virally, algorithmically enacted . . . without the artist’s physical self ever even being present.” The aforementioned vitrine, complete with trays of stationery, pencils, and book weights, likewise possessed a subtle staginess. Here, research was posited as a kind of pantomime, an idea that circulated through the assorted videos, industrially fabricated sculptures, and ready-made objects on display. *Estella Butler’s Apple Valley Autonomy, 2024*, a sculpture that resembled a to-scale chicken coop with shelves of file folders and storage boxes labeled BUTLER (OCTAVIA E.) PAPERS sequestered in its dim interior, alluded to the act of approaching and apprehending an archive rather than to the contents therein, which remained opaque to the viewer outside the wire mesh.

American Artist,
The Monophobic Response, 2024,
two-channel
HD video, color,
sound, 18 minutes
19 seconds. Photo:
Dan Bradica.



Behind a wall was a two-channel video, *The Monophobic Response, 2024*, which showed artists, engineers, and scholars role-playing characters from the *Parable* series, including the heroine Lauren Olamina, her lover Taylor Franklin Bankole, and members of their space-bound

religious community, Acorn. The LARPer—laboring under the bright desert sun of Altadena, California, while dressed in loose, blanché-looking garments—enacted the launch of a small-scale replica of a 1936 rocket engine, simultaneously performing their interpretations of Butler’s dramatis personae. Meanwhile, the group ostensibly gained a more experiential sense of the author’s worldview from participating in this artist-led social experiment. In the back of the exhibition space, a trove of science, religion, and history books established the conditions for our own independent research into Butler. The volumes were presented on an elevated platform reminiscent of what critic Jonathan Griffin—reviewing American Artist’s 2022 homage to the author at REDCAT in Los Angeles—called “a theatrical mise-en-scène.”

If the works in “Shaper of God” modeled new ways of “performing” research that exceeded the strictures of academic convention, so, too, did American Artist’s approach to absorbing and understanding Butler’s fiction. Although the show took its title from a line in *The Parable of the Sower* (1993)—the first installment in the series—much of the content from this dystopian bildungsroman was not commented upon here, likely due to how familiar it has now become with the general public. Foregrounded instead were minor world-building details: Take the single-channel video *Christopher Donner, 2024*, which parodied the campaign rhetoric of the titular president of the United States from the novel. Another video, *Alicia Catalina Godinez Leal, 2024*, dramatized a report on the death of the namesake astronaut described in the book’s exposition. With these pieces, American Artist broadened the affective dimensions of Butler’s narrative and drew out its connections to US politics today. In the vein of expertly crafted fan fiction—an art form of its own—American Artist’s tribute expanded the author’s universe with acute sensitivity toward the latent desires and emotional exigencies of its contemporary admirers.

—Jenny Wu

“Symbiosis: Art in the Age of AI”

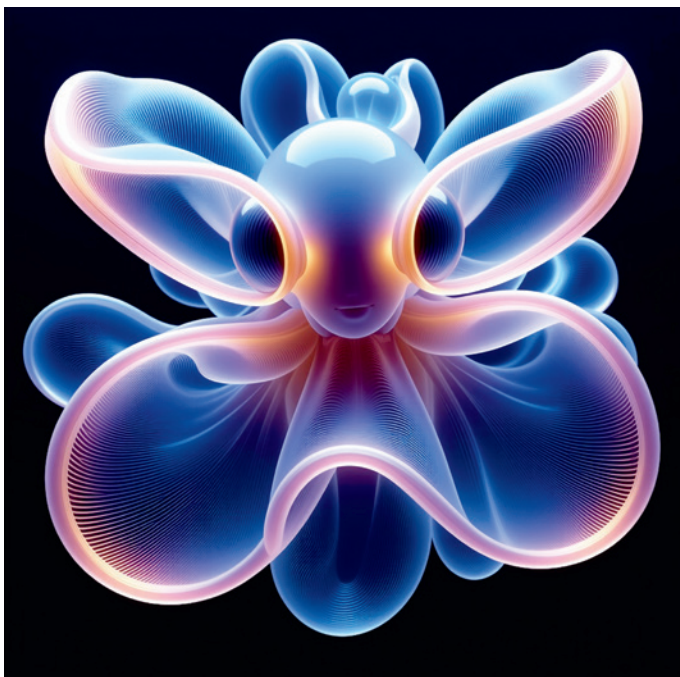
THE SYLVIA WALD AND PO KIM GALLERY

The small but significant exhibition “Symbiosis: Art in the Age of AI,” curated by artist Alexandra Dementieva and the gallery’s director, Odelette Cho, polemically named our age (one of AI) and aimed to develop a “symbiotic relationship between humans and machines,” according to the show’s organizers.

The cover image on the accompanying brochure—lifted from the installation *Hexad for a Guitarist and Artificial Organisms, 2025*, the beguiling and interactive result of a collaboration between artist Eunsu Kang and composer/guitarist Donald D. Craig—seductively made the case, showing us a creature that could be navigating my lymph system right now. Much as we wonder about the discourse of generative AI itself, we wanted to know: Is it a pet or a parasite? An “artificial organism” according to the artists’ description, it visually hybridizes the translucent iridescence of a Portuguese man-of-war and the manga-inspired Disney monster Stitch. These free associations lead me back to the actual science of symbiosis, since the man-of-war is, incredibly, a colony of symbionts: individuals evolutionarily derived from either polyps or medusae, self-assembling and traveling together in oceans that don’t require them to act like the bounded body of a species representative.

The bug-eyed critter may never have shown up on the assembled screens of the work, or at least we couldn’t predict when it would. If you picked up the prominently placed electric guitar, the images on the adjacent monitors began to change. But they did that regardless, leaving us to wonder what the interaction might be between music-making

Eunsu Kang and
Donald D. Craig,
*Hexad for a Guitarist
and Artificial
Organisms* (detail),
2025, five monitors,
stereo speaker
system, Motu digital
audio interface, Mac
Studio computer,
electric guitar, audio
cables, custom-made
software by artists,
dimensions variable.



agency and the synthesized digital entities that live only on-screen.

This is the divinatory nature of generative AI: We know we made it, but we want it to have some kind of mystical agency beyond us. As Rachel Ossip tartly labels these algorithms, they're an "alienated" intelligence. AI is entirely human in its foibles and biases—as is the toxic AI "broligarchy" now claiming to be sovereign in our land. The meanings and affects we supply to generative outputs are ours alone, just as the power we give to AI's capitalist overlords is ours to give away.

"Symbiosis" included computer-designed sculptures (Dementieva's *Mini-Totems*, 2022–25) and prints (by Lev Manovich), lots of videos (choreographed worms from computer artist William Latham, a creepy demo from Petermfriess, and Anna Frants's haunting diffusion riffs). It also offered an abstract sound work (by Aernoudt Jacobs) and the interactive *Hexad*. The latter's computer-generated images can help explain the species of silicon "life" provided in this show—usually on-screen. Kang's software is haunted by cinematic evocations of Jean Painlevé's early feats of underwater filmmaking: Floating in a dark surround, her creatures are boneless, flawless, and alone. Such isolates will go back into the bloated corpus of the commercially privatized training sets of generative AI—where they will fight to escape from DeepMind eyeballs and kittens. It takes a discerning eye to navigate machine vision's glitchy mangling of fingers, faces, and limbs. Artists are working hard to go beyond the banal and hypersaturated product coming out of these tools. Some of them here succeed.

Jacobs produced what he calls a "prototype"—the robustly abstract *Luminous Ether*, 2025. There is son et lumière here, but these sensory outputs are not bounded by a video screen or its embedded speakers. Instead, we get an ambient wash of noisy electromagnetics, shaped by a "mimetic" program that filters sonic data to convey uncanny murmurs and mutters, reminiscent of disembodied radio waves, made into liminally audible voices that can't quite be understood. The work materially offers five delicately suspended electro-luminescent speakers (as the artist calls them). These objects are connected by clips and tiny wires that link the pulses of sound to the flickering luminescence. Algorithms offer Jacobs a way of carving from electromagnetic noise the conventions and modulations of speech—which one hears dimly after straining to apprehend these shivering, intermittently glowing pieces

of paper. Divination, again—but here experienced as the sound of an electromagnetic spectrum fully saturated by humans.

Intriguing art is being made from infrastructures of copper, lithium, and silicon, enabled by massive server farms that appropriate obscene quantities of fossil fuel. But let us be very clear: This artistic tangle of human desires and machinic outputs is not a -biosis. Nor is it "sym," the together part of living-with that symbiosis designates. Claiming "symbiosis" is an ideological move, concealing how the crafted entities in this exhibition function as *prostheses*, i.e., human aids and human exploits.

—Caroline A. Jones

Karen Kilimnik

GLADSTONE GALLERY

During one of January's polar vortex collapses, I did something foolish: I went out to seek comfort in art. And shuddered. Why does the art world so love the cold gray approach in these cold gray climes? I needed color. Warmth. Representation. And glory be, I finally found it in Karen Kilimnik's debut at Gladstone Gallery, full of tropical fantasias right out of an 1890s South Seas adventure tale (or a current Virgin Islands travel pamphlet).

Azure skies smizing, beaches of cake-flour sand, cheery streaks of cirrus—honestly, that would have been enough. But Kilimnik fleshed out her sixteen-canvas-and-one-collage *wintervention*—yes, it's a thing—with other fantasyland emojis and stickies: sailboats, paisleys, cats, biplanes, castles, swans, peacocks, and so on. In one 2024 painting, there were even the *Loch Ness Monster and friends frolicking in the Shires, the Watery Woodland* (which is actually the work's title).

So, yes, there were other shows around with color, but Kilimnik's multivalent presentation warmed me far more because it seemed to frankly acknowledge one of art's most important and neglected missions: to comfort the afflicted. And, as it is for most folks, afflicted is pretty much my *genre identité* these days.

More vital, however, were the intense aesthetic, cultural, and historical layers that have long reverberated throughout the Philadelphia-based painter's oeuvre. One of the earliest, most talented, and most

Karen Kilimnik,
*russian church in
the forest*, 2024,
acrylic on canvas,
39½ × 53½".



uncredited OGs behind today's exploration of the naive, Kilimnik presented a show that epitomized all the sorcerous charm of an obsessive, insular girl's bedroom; she's a world maker, a forever-tween terraformer. She has the uncanny ability to engage viewers in a magical space-time where *I, unicorn* is both an anagram and a synonym of *unironic*.

Of course, all play and no work makes art a dull ploy, which Kilimnik, who is as much an insider as an outsider, has grasped from the beginning. One thing that makes her imagery such good viewing is something she probably loves—Easter eggs. As much entranced by the art-and-humanity narrative as she is by her own fairy-tale wonderlands, Kilimnik also relates her naive pictorial force to the various *génies* of the French Post-Impressionist and Fauvist canons (Bonnard, Dufy, Gauguin, Rousseau, et al.) as well as to the long-ago reveries of the Romantics, the earnestness of American Primitivism, and even the paratactic planes of Byzantine mosaics and early Renaissance paintings.

The *Dufy à la plage* influence was clear the moment you walked into Gladstone, where *Capri*, 2023, a dream of sailboats bobbing on the lapis Tyrhennian, hung behind the reception desk, making the gallery look rather like a travel agency in heaven. In many other paintings, the palm tree—that seductive siren of the plant kingdom—lured viewers to an imagined paradise that exists only in Kilimnikland (a reminder that the most literal meaning of *insular* is “island-like”). That literal insularity echoed figuratively as the show moved inland, with three almost identical sylvan pond-scapes, featuring swans (*Pond street, Mayfair, London – outside the Faberge egg forest*, 2024), flowers (*the floral forest*, 2024) or a Russian Orthodox *tserkov* (*russian church in the forest*, 2024), each encapsulating a different escapist moment from the Grimm reaper.

Familiar waters? To be sure. But to dismiss her late work as placid, shallow, or watercolored down is to miss how clearly and charmingly Kilimnik distills its essence. It is also to misunderstand that the desire to escape into another world is fundamental not only to artists, but to humanity. This desire is certainly crucial to Humanity '25, bringing to mind Baudelaire's 1857 poem “*L'Invitation au Voyage*” and its famed couplet that inspired Matisse's masterpiece: “*Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté / luxe, calme et volupté.*” It's the perfect expression for the artist's urgent vacation from wintry reality: “There, there's only order and beauty, luxury, calm and pleasure.” Remember—not every retreat is a rout.

—David Colman

Raoul De Keyser

DAVID ZWIRNER

“Touch Game,” an exhibition of canvases by Raoul De Keyser (1930–2012), demonstrated the prowess—technical, conceptual, pictorial—of an artist who was deeply influential to a generation of painters from his native Belgium (e.g., Michaël Borremans, Luc Tuymans) and whose renown extended well beyond the confines of Northwestern Europe. Featuring thirty paintings made between 1970 and 2011, the exhibition showcased De Keyser's gentle yet implacable abstractions. In them, one could see a masterful tuning of elements, constructed from successive layers of paint that vanished and emerged as the eye took them in.

In *Proloog* (Prologue) and *Clos* (Enclosure), both 2003, scattered archipelago-like forms in different shades of green take center stage against densely wrought and intricately constructed backdrops of variegated whites. The emerald shapes, with their irregular contours, seem culled from a particular visual lexicon—one that feels born out of a purely nonobjective realm, devoid of explicit referents. These and two other paintings in the show—*Presto* and *Resume*, both from the 2003 “Remnants” series—were conceived from the reordered fragments of

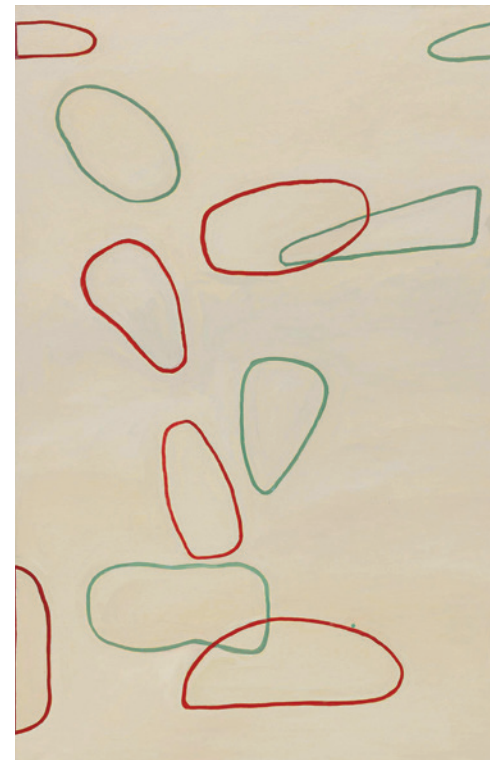
abandoned linocut prints the artist created in 1992. These so-called figurative elements subtly complicate any essentialist understandings and relationships between abstraction and representation.

De Keyser's practice of using older bodies of work to create newer ones underscores the significance of repetition for the artist. However, this approach did not yield predictable results, as we saw in the series “Come on, play it again,” 2001, in which De Keyser incorporates the improvisatory structural aspects of jazz to produce loose compositional arrangements. (It seems inevitable that the title of the series—a common misremembering of a line spoken by Ingrid Bergman's character in the 1942 film *Casablanca*—also evokes the artist's devotion to soccer, which appears to reach all the way back to *Kalklijn en twee groenen* (Chalk Line and Two Greens), 1970–71, a loose geometric abstraction that indeed resembles a section of a grassy *voetbal* field.)

The two most significant works in the exhibition, to my mind, were *Come on, play it again nr. 2* and *Come on, play it again nr. 4*. The former, horizontally oriented, presents a group of elliptical forms—executed in shades of orange, plum, coral, and blue—set against a white ground. None of the shapes touch one another or extend to or beyond the boundaries of the rectangular canvas. But a couple of them do bleed—carefully, and only with a minimum of expressionistic zeal—as we saw in the tangerine ovoid squatting in the painting's upper-left area. Yet in the latter, the rules are delicately inverted: It features amoeba-like outlines, executed in red and green, variously dancing and crashing into one another across a tawny field. Some of the blobs even butt up against the edges of the composition, like clumsy fish in a tall, narrow tank of water. The two works deftly balance play and formal rigor in a way that the other pieces here do not. They are giddy yet controlled, ecstatic but refined.

“Touch Game” exemplifies how De Keyser carried out his hard-won formal experimentation with a deceptively light touch. He deployed a visual grammar that, like an oscillating tide, ebbs and flows with remarkable grace. The artist continually dammed the latent forces that a painting can possess. But when he opens the floodgates, even with the utmost restraint, the effects are astounding.

—Mateus Nunes



Raoul De Keyser, *Come on, play it again nr. 4*, 2001, oil on canvas, 74 1/8 × 47 7/8". From the series “Come on, play it again,” 2001.

Deborah Kass

SALON 94

How different the New York art world was when Deborah Kass produced her 1989–92 series “The Art History Paintings.” That fin de siècle period fostered all manner of discourse relating to postmodernism, feminism, queer theory, multiculturalism, intersectionalism, and more. A shared sense of urgency—to dismantle hierarchies, to reconfigure the canon, to recuperate the suppressed cultural trajectories of the twentieth century—prevailed.

Appropriation, pastiche, parody—these conceptual strategies turned ideology into aesthetic currency, and they underwrite Kass's twelve-piece grouping of elegant, smart-alecky canvases. The artist rode that wave of resurgence into painting *hard*, defying the medium's sexism and psychodramas. One diptych, *My Spanish Spring*, 1991–92, features a version of Robert Motherwell's *Elegy to the Spanish Republic XXXIV*, 1953–54, which is stacked atop a cartoon rendering of a gentle bull named Ferdinand—a popular character from a 1936 children's book that operated as a stealthy critique of Spain's dictatorship under Francisco Franco—who prefers to smell posies rather than fight in the ring. Both images, of course, are inspired by resistance to authoritarianism. But Kass seems to ask, is Motherwell's statement more powerful because it falls into the realm of high art? After all, *The Story of Ferdinand*, written by Munro Leaf and illustrated by Robert Lawson, so incensed Franco that it was banned until 1975, the year he died.

The nearly four-by-nine-foot *Untitled (First World, Third World)*, 1990, depicts Disney's Dumbo, the flying baby elephant, gliding over an African savanna—a scene that is interrupted by a rendition of an Analytical Cubist painting (think Picasso's 1911–12 canvas *Ma Jolie* [My Pretty]). The painting's fragmented visual clues point to the pachyderm rather than to the notorious abstractionist's imaginary lover. Kass is having sport with the seriousness of modernism while playfully

promoting semiotic confusion. Like a number of the paintings here, it seems as though it were dreamed up by a hallucinating AI. Instead of the African tribal artifacts synonymous with the invention of Cubism, we are given a McDonald's Happy Meal version of wildlife in Africa.

Kass's blasphemies were often sharpened by her use of cartoon imagery. Deployed to challenge the hegemony of haute culture, they also served as quotation devices to capture the energy of Pop art, which invariably led to Andy Warhol, a kind of godfather to Kass's work. In *Before and Happily Ever After*, 1991, the artist appropriates Warhol's famous black-and-white painting of a nose-job ad (replacing a schnozz that looks "ethnic" with a perkier, WASPIER one) and pairs it with a

still from Disney's *Cinderella* (1950), depicting the moment at which the titular character discovers that the glass slipper fits only her! This isn't just a send-up of art; it's a pointed message about the cultural constructions of femininity.

In the diptych *Making Men 4*, 1992, the main attraction, in the upper register, is two male wrestlers clinched in a tight embrace. They are rendered in a sketchy style that recalls David Salle's canvases from the early 1980s. The lower section of the piece features white rivulets of paint that appear to have been flung across the black ground: a gushing reference to Pollock and his—*ahem*—seminal ejaculatory gesture. Spanning both sections of the composition is a third element, borrowed from a Warhol dance-diagram silk screen. In Kass's hands, the pattern of rhythmic footprints is overlaid to deliver a forceful kick to the balls of one of the grapplers. Let's think of it as pictorial payback to the patriarchy.

Perhaps the most surprising element of the series is its gay-male eroticism. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1991, pairs a masturbating

male figure in the work's lower portion topped by a black field with white splatters. Superimposed over the entire composition is a line drawing of an early self-portrait by Picasso, whose lips are laid over the man's cock, as if the Spanish master were performing fellatio. *Emissions Control*, 1989–90, just over eleven feet long, presents a Dionysian orgy of elements. Comprising five different sections, the painting includes depictions of a pornographically erect penis, black and white drips, cataclysmically exploding buildings, a pale-pink vertical stripe, and a picture of vapor trails against a desert landscape with a little caption that reads THE END. Herein lies the polysemic appeal of these paintings. Kass mocks the male-dominated hierarchy of art history while identifies—and even empathizes—with gay male artists. Her queering of the canon is perverse, playful, and deviously intelligent.

—Jan Avgikos

Roger-Edgar Gillet

PETZEL GALLERY

Is a six-piece appetizer ever really a full meal? Odd as it sounds, this exhibition of paintings by Roger-Edgar Gillet (1924–2004)—his second with Petzel, titled "Dinner Party"—answered the question decisively: Yes, it can be a feast.

Lest one be sated already by meal metaphors, there were, in fact, multiple moments in the show where the painterly commingled with the gustatory. In *Nature morte aux cotelettes* (Still Life with Cutlets), 1980, for instance, the artist pushed around a cascade of vegetables rendered in heavy oils until they flanked one of the titular chops, a hunk of bone adumbrated by a fleshy cadmium red, sinews glistening. (You could almost smell the linseed oil.) In a similar vein, the chop's sanguine hues bleed into the heap of shellfish of *Les homards* (The Lobsters), 1969, a pile of peculiar little creatures, raw and cooked—a reminder that, more than anything, Gillet was a painter of ambiguous, ambulatory meats. Many call this portraiture.

Today, Gillet is remembered primarily for his association with *art brut* and art informel, movements of the late 1940s and the '50s that shared an affinity with the base, the brutal, and the corporeal. Michel Tapié—the major champion of art informel whose foundational 1952 catalogue, *Un art autre* (Another Art), included Gillet's work—noted this visceral dimension from the start. He expressed it with culinary metaphors.

Roger-Edgar Gillet, *Les voyeurs*, 1975, oil on canvas, 73¼ × 118".



Deborah Kass, *My Spanish Spring*, 1991–92, oil, acrylic, and Flashe paint on canvas, 76 × 63". From the series "The Art History Paintings," 1989–92.

Recalling Jean Dubuffer's *Madame mouche* (Madame Fly), 1945, for instance, he wrote in 1948: "Figure with colors of caramel, eggplant, blackberry jelly, and caviar, adorned with egg-white holes in which a syrupy varnish of molasses color has accumulated here and there."

Gillet's *Untitled*, 1996, could support a similar description: It is a Maillard reaction of messy ochers, lardoons of paint marbled into form. But the scrapple is also a portrait (or anti-portrait, to employ a term the artist used as early as the mid-'60s), albeit one so layered by palette knife that no discernible features—save for the outline of a head—coalesce into recognition. Though executed late in the artist's life, the canvas hints at the shift separating Gillet from his contemporaries—namely, a return to figuration just as postpainterly abstraction was becoming a plat du jour. The artist's reversion to this mode is often discussed in reviews and press releases and, like any worthwhile biographical chestnut, is overdetermined. It goes like this: In 1955, in New York, and in a moment of high abstraction, Gillet stood before El Greco's *Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara*, ca. 1600, and was struck by the figure's face, his glare from behind a pair of little round spectacles. As the artist later recalled, "Before the wickedness of this look I told myself that with abstract painting we lost something: We could no longer paint the depth of a look."

Such a realization might strike the arch formalist as obvious—part of the modernist project is to mourn painting's losses—but Gillet's recalcitrance set him against both the supremacy of 1960s flatness and the trends toward anti- or acultural painting embraced by Tapié and critic Charles Estienne. Sensing this, Estienne—who had coined the term New School of Paris in 1952 and included Gillet in that formulation—later recast the artist as a true outsider. He worked *dans la solitude impitoyable*, observed Estienne: "Baudelaire was very alone at home in Paris, Gauguin alone at home in the Marquesas . . . and Gillet is very alone at home in his painting."

Gillet's show was scumbled with that pitiless solitude, even among works overwhelmed by figuration. *Les voyeurs*, 1975, the largest work on view, exuded this scopophilic "alone at home" effect. The figures surround what feels like a sacrificial event—as if one were witness to the Bacchae's frenzy. They cluster in shadow but do not recede in depth; they merely flatten. And here is the contradiction driving Gillet's work: The more he strove to return to the intensity of looking, the shallower his field of view became.

Only time will tell whether Gillet's work is the kind of red meat art history will happily devour. Nevertheless, it isn't the cut and quantity that count. What really makes a feast is the appetite of the guest. And given the hunger today for new chapters in the history of figuration, the show proved extremely satisfying.

—Jonathan Odden

Diane Burko

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Diane Burko's "Bearing Witness," her exhibition at Cristin Tierney, examined the boundlessness of nature's sublimity, even in the midst of terrifying ecological collapse. The artist's mixed-media paintings—grand, spectacular works that are both figurative and abstract—are an ingenious fusion of AbEx abandon and impressionistic delicacy. Take *Summer Heat 1 & 2*, 2020, which is seven feet high and more than thirteen feet wide. The right side, made up of four separate canvases, features a weather map–like rendering of Italy, doused in fiery oranges and reds—surely a statement on the crushing swelter that took over the country at the start of the titular season the year this piece was made. The cool blues surrounding the boot-shaped nation, alas, provide no relief. To the left of this scene were two more canvases, hung atop one



Diane Burko, *Summer Heat 1 & 2*, 2020, diptych, mixed media on canvas, overall 7' x 13' 6".

another. In the lower portion, we experienced some kind of sylvan conflagration. We also saw a silhouette of a creature being burned alive near a denuded tree—an omen of mass extinction, perhaps.

These paintings are driven by what Kandinsky called an "inner necessity," a compulsion fueled by the artist's deep spiritualism. But Burko's art is guided by an unwavering environmentalism. In 1977, at the age of thirty-two, she flew with James Turrell in his Helio Courier aircraft over the Grand Canyon. One wonders if this trip helped foster her reverence for sweeping landscapes, which links her paintings, however obliquely, to the Hudson River School's transcendentalist depictions of nature. Clearly the artist was taken with light and space, Turrell's ostensibly matterless subject matter. Burko has since traveled the world, taking in the fjords of Greenland and the volcanoes of Hawai'i and Iceland. In 2013 she went to Antarctica and the Arctic to see firsthand the melting of the polar ice caps. In 2023 she journeyed to the Amazon rainforest to study the effects of record-breaking wildfires and deforestation. She has used satellite-derived imagery, among other photographic sources, as a means to her aesthetic ends, and she was profoundly influenced by Al Gore's ecological activism.

A trio of smaller canvases, all twenty inches square, were hermetically self-contained masterpieces—more powerful, to my mind, than the larger paintings. In *Amazon 34*, 2024, a disk centers a kind of orange "sun" surrounded by leaves and flowers that appear to emanate from it. The flora hover over a black ground—a sort of limbo space, a portal into nothingness. In *Amazon 35*, 2024, the golden disk has expanded; pine fronds are visible through a hole in the middle of the shape as more greenery tentatively embraces the bright orb like a funeral wreath. In *Unprecedented Study 3*, 2021, we see a quartet of pale moons in different sizes, placed against an abstracted landscape marked by verdant growths and blue sky. Below this tableau is a dark predella full of ghostly figures akin to amorphous spirits resting comfortably in a grave. Since Burko is now eighty years old, I suggest that these remarkable works are not just memento mori for our decaying world, but memorials to the artist herself, in anticipation of her own death. They are marvelous revelations of nature in a metamorphic process, from wondrous beginning to heartrending end.

—Donald Kuspit

Faith Wilding

ANAT EBGİ

"Faith Wilding: Inside, outside, alive in the shell" was a small and deftly selected survey featuring sculptures, texts, artist's books, photographs,

videos, archival materials, and exquisitely rendered works on paper made over the course of fifty years by this key originator and historian of West Coast feminist art. The earliest drawings on view, full of ovoid cellular forms in settings both pastoral and corporeal, exalted in those forces—cosmic, primeval, generative, cyclical—that run in strict opposition to patriarchy, greed, exploitation, and capitalism.

From the get-go, the artist achieved a high level of formal and conceptual coherence with her brilliant performance *Waiting*, 1972, which premiered at *Womanhouse*, a groundbreaking group installation organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, founders of the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts in Santa Clarita, where Wilding was a student. At Anat Ebgi, a color video recording of the piece played on an old CRT monitor. The artist, as though in a prolonged state of suspended animation, gently rocks back and forth, gathering forces never to be released. In a plaintive, incantatory voice—the sound of which permeated the gallery—she tells the story of a woman’s life from birth to death. The work’s tension is explosive. Like the video, Wilding’s art finds its power in compression.

With a deliberate avoidance of thematic groupings or chronological development, the show emphasized the artist’s stylistically diverse approaches to depicting the human figure via illustrational patterns and motifs. Wilding’s polymorphous and often erotic renderings of organic structures—bones, shells, ribbons, horns, leaves, and stems—venture into the surrealistic. The most fascinating examples portray vegetal shapes that fold in on themselves to create enclosed spaces, like pea pods or curled-up leaves. We saw this in the fifty-by-seventy-inch drawing *Bird of Paradise: Virgin Goddess*, 1978, which features the titular flower (calling

to mind one of Georgia O’Keeffe’s supernatural skulls) rendered in graphite and colored pencil and set against a Pattern and Decoration background executed in gold leaf. The cutout oil-on-unstretched-canvas *Leaf Series: The Comforter*, 1976–78, mounted directly to the wall, embraced the architecture of the gallery and succinctly articulated Wilding’s ongoing interests in ecology and natural life cycles. An enticing sense of mystery in the inner space of these baroquely twisting and realistic forms distinguished them from the artist’s more conventionally flat renderings of animal and botanical subjects in pieces ranging from *Species Scroll*, 1987, to *Tree at My Window*, 2024.

Other works, however, departed from the precision and interiority of *Leaf Series* with a furious expressionism. A pair of harrowing drawings powerfully conveyed grief at violence perpetrated against women. At more than six feet high, *Forced Pregnancy*, 1993, and *Raped Dress*, 1993–94, depict full-length frocks, rendered in watercolor and ink on vellum. In both pieces, the soft cream color of the vellum is agitated by applications of brown and ocher scumbled with gum arabic. The images, while sickening, are captivating.

Frequently incorporating text in her work, Wilding draws inspiration from illuminated manuscripts, the eschatological poetry of William Blake, and mediations on goddess mythology by authors such as Jane Harrison. Wilding has previously exhibited her explorations into the

life and legacy of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), a Christian mystic and polymath. Artist’s books such as *Hildegard Book*, 1983, and the mixed-media drawing *I, Hildegard, Saw*, 2020, though well-executed, are perhaps a bit too literalist in their attempt to convey the visionary philosophy of the Benedictine abbess. I prefer the uninhibited rawness of watercolors such as *When Thinking of Breasts*, 1987, which pairs an aqueous rendering of a figure with a text by the artist. While not featured here, an impressive group of related works, her watercolor series “Tears,” 2004—, made an impression on me in the two-person show “Arrows of Desire” (2021)—an homage to Blake—with sculptor Harry Gould Harvey IV at David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. The pungent interplay between image and thought animates Wilding’s multifarious approach to the lived experiences of historical women through the connective tissue of shared embodiment and cultural resistance.

—Daniel Belasco

Jilaine Jones

15 ORIENT

How often these days do you come across a more or less orthodox adherent of the Julio González/David Smith/Anthony Caro lineage of welded-metal sculpture? Rarely. And one who is even capable of making that tradition feel fresh and vital? Just about never. So the work of Jilaine Jones comes as a surprise. As we learned from her exhibition here, which featured twenty works created between 2005 and 2024, Jones makes her tradition new by making it old—by treating it as historical and full of memories. She puts her steel beams, pipes, and wires—linear elements, made from things that Smith, for instance, explicitly recognizes as representing “power, structure, movement, progress, suspension, destruction, brutality”—into dialogue with more plastic materials. Clay, plaster, concrete, and Hydrocal form rough, lumpy, quasi-organic masses of indistinct and indefinite shape, like random remnants of timeworn structures or obsolete parts of buildings, perhaps left in place because such items would have been more inconvenient to remove than to just paint over and pretend they’re not really there. (I’ll admit this association was probably prompted by the elegantly distressed postindustrial environment provided by 15 Orient’s spacious new quarters in Manhattan’s TriBeCa neighborhood.)

Jilaine Jones,
*The Walk with
D. Ann*, 2011, steel,
34 × 60 × 16”.



Faith Wilding,
I, Hildegard, Saw,
2020, watercolor,
colored pencil, ink,
gold leaf on paper,
18 3/4 × 14 3/8”.

Jones's use of color marks a clear distinction between her art and that of her most immediate precursor, Caro. Consider the large sculpture *The Walk with D. Ann*, 2011, one of only two pieces here that were made exclusively from steel: The sprawling horizontality of the work's many rising and falling lines and fewer planes follows Caro in its suggestion that sculpture can be a place rather than an object. With the title, one senses an evocation of the path that was walked more than the actual person with whom the walk was taken. But in contrast to the crisp bright reds and yellows Caro favored in such classic sculptures as *Early One Morning*, 1962, and *Prairie*, 1967, Jones has chosen a subdued, slightly worn-out mustard that lends her piece an aura of moody reminiscence. Caro's color took some of the weight off his steel; Jones's underlines the metal's earthy density while adding a touch of funkiness.

Like almost everyone in the 1960s, it seems, Caro was fascinated by a present that always appeared to be on the cusp of the future, and his palette helped his forms cut their way into that space. Our today, however, turns out to live on the verge of its own pastness, making it feel like something of a fossil (I'm borrowing this word, by the way, from a few of Jones's titles). A lot of these pieces, especially the smaller, tabletop-scale sculptures, look like they could have been dredged up from a demolition site. They suggest an urban archaeology, as if someone were on a melancholic hunt for remnants of a Rust Belt city's tangible past. If some of the works' titles imply more Proustian searches for personal recollections—*She Is Like Her Children*, 2005; *Long Corner of a Friend's Studio*, 2014—that's only to say that my stray bit of plumbing might be your petite madeleine.

Four of the works here departed from the dominant steel-plus-material vocabulary. *Horizon in the Hand* (1), (2), and (3), all 2018, are made from torqued and distended tubular fingers of fired clay—as if the hands of the title had themselves been stretched out to form horizons. These works are homages to their own handmade-ness, exemplifications of the vastness of scope an artist can offer with what's haptically immediate. But the show's surprise tour de force might have been *MacDowell Woods*, 2014, a small, wall-mounted paper construction whose layered planes present a few upright cylindrical treelike forms, but whose real subject seems to be the unseeable folds and supports beneath the topmost plane, which one gets hints of by looking from the side. The piece is as sculptural as it is pictorial and, for all its delicacy and elusiveness, makes an obdurate impact.

—Barry Schwabsky

NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK

“Landmines”

SAMUEL DORSKY MUSEUM OF ART

Curated by Sophie Landres, “Landmines”—a four-person exhibition presenting the work of Dawoud Bey, Christina Fernandez, Richard Mosse, and Rick Silva—identifies particularly large historical targets to blow up or destabilize. Foremost among them is the bicentennial of the 1825 trip up New York's Hudson River taken by artist Thomas Cole, an excursion widely credited with launching the Hudson River School. The movement is celebrated for its production of idyllic paintings capturing the environs that aimed to celebrate nature's beauty, ostensibly leading to spiritual renewal. But the group has also been vilified for helping to displace Indigenous populations from the territories they lived on at the time.

Fernandez, a Mexican American artist, determinedly places people back into the conversation about land. Her installation *Untitled Farmworker*, 1989/2025, features a wall-mounted grid of photographs depicting index cards with the names of day laborers and the ways they were



Dawoud Bey, *Cabin and Spanish Moss*, 2019, gelatin silver print, 44 × 55". From the series “In This Here Place,” 2019.

wounded or killed while toiling on corporate farms in California. (The cards were originally typed up during a performance at the University of California, Los Angeles, where Fernandez was a student thirty-six years ago.) On the floor nearby is a large rectangle of soil with the actual cards planted in it, upright, like headstones—effectively turning a section of the gallery into a graveyard.

Fernandez's piece, perhaps the most poignant offering here, also reads as a meaningful response to another historical occurrence that shaped the development of the Hudson River School and the ground on which the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art sits: the forced relocation of large populations of the Muh-he-con-neok, and neighboring Munsee-speaking Lenape, to Wisconsin. This had long been occurring as white settlers used various unscrupulous means to gain ownership of the land, which culminated in the 1832 congressional adoption of President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act.

During this period, the technological development of landscape photography, by way of French inventor Nicéphore Niépce, allowed viewers to regard the landscape in empirical ways, particularly as discrete sections of demarcated terrain, selected for exploitation. This is textbook colonialism: Vanquish the natives, pretend they were never there, and steal all they had used or possessed.

Oregon-based artist Silva makes plain the rapacious uses to which lens-based technology can be put in his video *Western Fronts: Cascade Siskiyou, Gold Butte, Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Bears Ears*, 2018. His soaring drone footage, projected on a wall at nine by sixteen feet, transmits images of places in the western US that lost their protections as national monuments under the first Trump administration as a result of its fervent hostility to ecological preservation. The cameras sweep over landscapes in California, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah, moving like untiring machines that locate underground ore deposits, as if by X-ray vision. These lodes appear in the work as superimposed images—triangle, circle, diagonal band—through a type of photogrammetry that land surveyors use to analyze and digitally map an area's natural resources.

Irish photographer Mosse also employs tools used by those who despoil the earth: multispectral cameras that mimic satellite visualization technology and ultraviolet microscopic imaging. His “Broken Spectre” series, 2018–22, documents environmental devastation in and around the Amazon Basin. But the pictures don't quite convey danger and degradation—they are too attractive. Looking at *Oil Spill on Kichwa Territory II, Block 192, Rio Tigre, Loreto*, 2023, we see trees and plants festooning a bend in the river, all dappled in rainbow light. One doesn't perceive the deforestation and pollution that the wall text insists is

happening. And this is enlightening—the work mirrors the relentless aestheticization of the land for which Cole and his like are recognized.

The last gallery displays the work of Chicago-based photographer Dawoud Bey, whose 2019 series “In This Here Place” returns to an ongoing theme in the artist’s work: rendering ignored and underrepresented people visible. Bey’s images of former plantation sites in Louisiana where Black people were enslaved have an eerie feel precisely because no one is there. Their absence is as disturbing as the wailing of a siren.

I’m reminded of a definition of teaching given to me by an elementary-school art teacher many years ago. She said she was planting small bombs inside the students, not knowing when they might go off. In some ways, “Landmines” seeks to do the same for its viewers: bury ideas in us that might someday explode our ways of seeing landscape.

—*Seph Rodney*

WASHINGTON, DC

D. Y. Begay

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

When D. Y. Begay signed up for a weaving class in 1978, her instructor was at a loss: “I wondered what I could possibly teach her,” she said. Begay was precocious, her fluidity at the loom undeniable. But she was also restless. In her journal—one of many she kept over the years—she scrawled, *Experiment, experiment!* Begay traveled to Peru and Guatemala, to Sweden and Japan, inflecting her tapestries with aspects of sundry cultures, combining Diné aesthetics—the artist was born in 1953 in Tséłání on the Navajo Nation reservation—with a modernist’s sense of invention, heterodoxy, and play. She has a wanderer’s impulse, charting a path, then taking another. Her show at the National Museum of the American Indian, “Sublime Light,” gives viewers the opportunity to dive deep into Begay’s carefully and elaborately crafted works, where each threaded wisp feels impossibly, delectably arranged.

Begay grew up climbing juniper trees and exploring canyons. She’d study the luminescence of the daytime sky, cataloguing “golden, sometimes intimidating reds” or “enchanting” and “beguiling” blues. In her tapestries, Begay the colorist emerges. Consider *Natural Two*, 2010, an expansive wool work patterned with swirls of sap green and jacinth. Or the lustrous *Confluence of Lavender*, 2016, flecked with mauves, violets, and a dusting of amber. The striking pairings—of apricots and silvery greens, plums and lemon yellows—hang together like a horizon at dusk, at once familiar and unknown.

The artist’s instinctiveness permeates the show. Her smoky abstractions—which depart from more traditional approaches and strict geometric designs—dip into a panoply of shades, with seemingly no

beginning or end. Take *Red Earth*, 2007, which features a vermilion ground bracketed by thick sweeps of gunmetal, or *The Edge*, 2013, a frenzy of peaches and saffrons streaked with zigzagging slashes of black. The effect is absorbing, like a jazz solo, ricocheting here and there. To stand before her tapestries is to follow one thread, then another, never losing the rhythm.

There’s no formula to Begay’s work. At times, warping a loom is “tedious” for the artist; at others, when the colors are “already dancing in my head,” it’s effortless. As a child, Begay watched her mother weave, studying the placement of her hands, the tendrils of yarn. She found the art “mystifying”; something within it “entranced” her. Her work today is no less spellbinding, running in all directions, “[free] to roam.”

Begay has been roaming for years. Her studies on paper, themselves marvels, chronicle a life in motion: One was dashed off on the tailgate of her truck, another during a frigid sojourn in Minnesota. From her early stylized wools to her loosely arranged masterworks, she flits between one pattern and another, arriving at something all her own. When Begay first showed *The Natural*, 1994—an intricate field of copper shading into sage—she was met with a flurry of questions. The picture, melding stark bands of color with delicately veiled gradations as her linework virtually unfurls in pools of light, was her first foray into the impressionistic. Asked to define the work, she said simply, “It’s my style.”

“Today I began anew” the Navajo writer Luci Tapahonso declares in a poem included in the exhibition catalogue. The statement reverberates throughout Begay’s tapestries. In *Enchanted Indigo*, 2022, a single slash of cerulean and cream cuts across a midnight-blue ground. The colors sit anxiously, tenuously, waiting for something to happen. Begay, too, is poised at the edge, ready to begin anew.

—*Angelica Hankins*

CHICAGO

Jordan Ann Craig

BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART

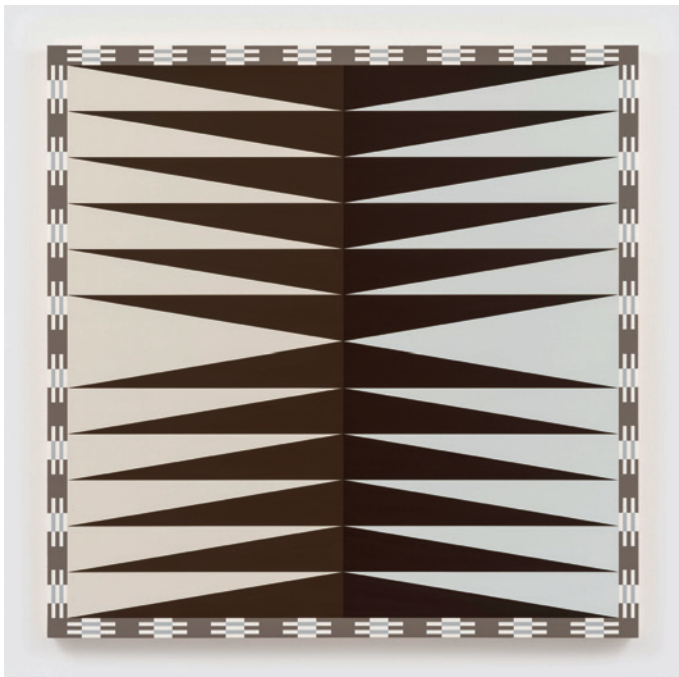
From beginning to end, Jordan Ann Craig’s painting process is methodical, direct. The Northern Cheyenne artist begins by culling abstract motifs from Indigenous art and artifacts, including quillwork, Pueblo pottery, and Cheyenne beadwork. She then translates this visual information into hard-edge and color-modulated compositions in Photoshop. She transfers the digital mock-ups onto canvas and applies thin layers of acrylic paint, using masking tape to produce her sharply delineated forms, which are summoned from exactly conceived matrices of chroma. Craig’s largest institutional exhibition to date, “it takes a long time to stay here”—the title of which is taken from the 2022 poem “spinning air” by Northern Cheyenne poet m. s. RedCherries—featured seven canvases. It also included a specially made textile used to upholster the cushions of two wooden benches installed along the center axis of the modestly sized gallery within the Northwestern University museum’s first floor.

Every component in every piece was deliberately and fastidiously conceived. Craig’s works rely heavily on mathematical organization: Repetitive grids are formulaically subdivided, allowing for certain kinds of directional changes and shifts in scale and pattern. The roughly three-and-a-half-foot-square *Baby You’re So Blue*, 2021, occupied a wall near the gallery’s entrance. Its composition—of rectangular modules containing a tight arrangement of narrow azure bars set side by side, placed both horizontally and vertically against a shimmering white field—is exquisite but orthodox. The artist tidily synthesizes her references, which are in dialogue with all manner of Minimalist

D. Y. Begay,
The Natural, 1994,
wool, plant dyes,
46% × 27 3/4%.



Jordan Ann Craig,
Sharp Tongue: Working on Empathy,
2024, acrylic on
canvas, 70 × 70".



abstraction produced during the twentieth century. Countering this airy austerity was *The Space Between the Clouds and the Horizon*, 2024, a large diptych that employs a heavy, brick-like arrangement of lines in various reds that are interrupted on each canvas by a column of mountain-like or gable-shaped forms, which help to firmly cement the composition in space.

Sharp Tongue: Used to Cut Deep and *Sharp Tongue: Working on Empathy*, both 2024, hung together on the south gallery wall. Each is organized around a central alignment of spiky, attenuated triangles—the works' namesake tongues. The spiny midlines dividing the compositions allows the paintings to possess two distinct regions that are nearly indistinguishable in tone. In these canvases, the interrelationship between color and shape is less predictable, and thus visually and conceptually more active—the paintings are rich in their evocations of atmospheric light and landscape. This pairing unfolds organically and mysteriously, surpassing the cool arithmetic of the works' digital origins. Because of this, they were the most surprising and satisfying offerings here.

Craig's flat, graphic surfaces double down on reductivist painting sensibilities. However, the dyed natural fibers of the blue, beige, and off-white upholstery she created for exhibition's furniture provided a warm contrast to the harsh precisionism of her masked-off canvases. The comfortable gallery seating was meant to solicit protracted viewing of the works on display—even the show's title suggested that we stop and linger. But the few pieces that actually transcended the artist's calculated perfectionism were, indeed, the ones that made us feel most welcome.

—Michelle Grabner

Diana Guerrero-Maciá

SECRIST/BEACH

Each year more than 325 avian species use the Mississippi Flyway, a migratory path that extends from Canada through the Midwestern United States to the Caribbean and South America. Their seasonal movements, threatened by climate change and urban development,

served as metaphors for displacement, unity, and exchange in Diana Guerrero-Maciá's commanding exhibition of more than twenty works. Throughout her textile-based paintings and vibrant mixed-media collages, the artist simultaneously invoked histories of modernist abstraction and the natural world from which they derive.

Found images of birds, trees, waterways, and building facades from the artist's native Cuba function as symbols of place and exile in the 2023–24 collage series "Paintings for Birds," the show's namesake. However, these pictorial elements transcend their specificity through juxtapositions within gridded arrangements of geometric forms, rendered in gouache on paper in a palette of hot pinks, sunny yellows, cool lavenders, and earthen blacks and browns. Not unlike the constructed landscapes of Jan Dibbets, Guerrero-Maciá's pieces show one reality grafted onto another, evoking harmonic spatial environments where abstraction and nature coexist. For instance, in *Painting for Birds no. 4*, a configuration of four painted spheres, the collaged image of a bowed tree limb becomes the outer edge of a pale-rose orb. A photograph of a sunken sailboat occupies the upper-right quadrant of *Paintings for Birds no. 9*. Buoyed by abutting rectangles of black, orange, and a watery blue, the work becomes a study in perception and movement against a scene of thwarted passage. (These themes of transfer and migration were sonically interpreted in an accompanying installation, *Pourparler*, 2025, by musician Joseph Adamik, in which the warbles of fifteen birds that travel the Mississippi Flyway filled the gallery's salon space—staged as a tree-lined park after dusk—with avian song.)

Guerrero-Maciá's elemental compositions borrow from Constructivism and Color Field painting, whose visual languages she also brings to her cloth works, or what the artist refers to as "unpainted pictures." Combining nineteenth-century quilting techniques and discarded fabrics that have been dyed, cut, and stitched into various geometric shapes, the artist constructs patterned fields that expand the definitions of both textiles and painting.

The checkerboard design of *GLAZIER no. 1*, 2024, synchronously reads as patchwork and window. Here, panes of black wool alternate with framed sequences of blank canvas and swatches of quilts and sourced fabrics. Other works similarly explore the tension between the pictorial and various textile traditions. *PARLEY no. 1*, 2024, a dazzling red-and-white composition whose geometry is built from oscillating triangles of scarlet pigmented towels, flags, and deconstructed clothing, equally suggests family heirloom and banner. *CLOUDS*, 2024—four circles cut from lightly stained drop cloths surrounding sewn strips of wool and repurposed garments—summoned the artist's interest in color and form as well as a phenomenology of the physical world. The latter two works were displayed against a spattering of wall-mounted blue fabric rectangles that elicited patches of sky.

Despite their formal veneer, Guerrero-Maciá's hybrid assemblages reveal the architecture of their own making, employing an expressive materiality aligned with post-Minimalism's penchant for process and subjectivity. The artist inflects her surfaces with traces of the body through her chosen media, which include, in addition to used fabrics and sec-

Diana Guerrero-Maciá,
PARLEY no. 1, 2024,
dye, gouache,
deconstructed clothing,
towels, and flag on
canvas, 56 × 48".



ondhand clothing, the occasional button and grommet and—in the case of *NOMAD no. 1*, 2023, and *NOMAD no. 2*, 2024—small pieces of driftwood and feathers. As signifiers of human corporeality and use, textiles operate as a scaffolding for the warp and weft of contemporary issues around exploited labor, off-site manufacturing, and global commerce. For the artist, such vestments are also potent containers of a former life, embodying the plight of the exile.

—Susan Snodgrass

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

“Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene”

CANTOR ARTS CENTER AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

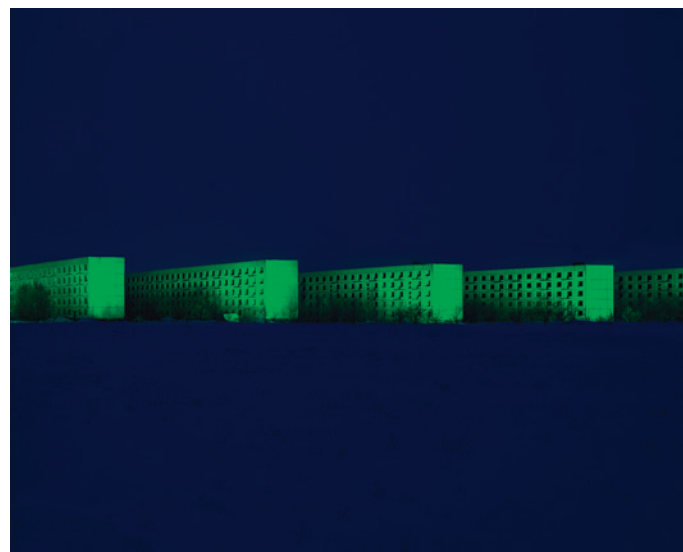
The conceit of “Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene” is that as humans have come to recognize their responsibility as agents in transforming the equilibriums of our planet, photography has come to enjoy a privileged role in picturing that transformation. This is partly due to the medium’s long and intimate relationship with the genres of landscape and documentary, but also derives from what the curators call the vast “expansion of technical possibilities” afforded by digital-imaging technologies.

One would thus expect the works in a gallery titled “Envisioning Tomorrow,” the last in the exhibition, to be some of the most advanced in the show, technically or aesthetically. Instead, we get saccharine works such as Cara Romero’s *Evolver* from the series “Jackrabbit, Cottontail & Spirits of the Desert,” 2019, which shows four children wearing feathered headdresses, aviator sunglasses, loincloths, and big smiles as they run across a gravel plain backed by a vast Southern California wind farm. Similar images were featured on billboards for the 2019 Coachella Valley edition of Desert X, their purpose being, as the catalogue for “Second Nature” tells us, to reveal to viewers “what it means and feels like to be on Native land.” If what it means is once again presenting Indigenous peoples as allegories of a healthy relationship to the environment, embodied here by smiling kids running barefoot and barely clothed (while practicing good ocular hygiene no less), then what it feels like is kitsch.

Or consider the gorgeously composed images of African women collecting and carrying water jugs depicted in Aïda Muluneh’s 2018 series “Water Life.” Only in Muluneh’s pictures, the women don costumes that tend toward regency chic (think *Bridgerton*) as if to argue that whatever the labor might be, doing it in style is what counts. When something like advanced technology is pictured, as in Icelandic artist Anna Línal’s matter-of-fact portraits of environmental monitoring devices—*Auga* (Eye), 2015, and *Vald vitneskjunnar* (The Power of Knowing), 2010—the effect is more cargo cult than climate futurism.

However, plenty of examples of advanced imagemaking and thinking are on display here. Danila Tkachenko’s works from his series “Acid,” 2019, which document the radiation that persists at sites of Soviet-era pollution in Russia and Kazakhstan, are dreadful in the best way. Inka and Niclas Lindergård’s *Adaptive Colorations I*, 2016, suggests what it might look like when objects from the “natural” landscape mimic highly manipulated landscape images. Each side of a large rectangular pedestal is covered in a photograph of a mountainscape as seen from within a highly colorized cavern, while pebbles, sticks, and bone fragments on or next to the pedestal are also “wrapped” with those portions of the photographs they otherwise occlude from view. The result could be described as either a perverse yet beautiful camouflage, or what it might look like when images eat the world.

When it comes to thinking about the Anthropocene, however, there is a contradiction that “Second Nature” doesn’t explicitly present but nevertheless pictures: The photographs of this new “age,” with all of its degradations and catastrophes, *look really good*. One need only consider the spectrum colors and geometrical expanse of Edward Burtynsky’s *Lithium Mine #1, Salt Flats, Atacama Desert, Chile*, 2017, or the crackling psychedelics of Matthew Brandt’s *Vatnajökull YCM17*, 2018–20. These are signs of environmental decay that read as wonders.



Danila Tkachenko, *Радиоактивный город (Казakhstan) (Radioactive City [Kazakhstan])*, 2019, inkjet print, 20 x 25". From the series “Acid,” 2019. From “Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene.”

But is this the register in which we want to be picturing the Anthropocene? One could sidestep this question by saying that these works are instead sublime, that it is their mixture of beauty and terror that is so affecting. I’m not quite sure that’s the move to make, unless what we’re focused on is that sense of remove and ultimate self-control in the face of the infinite that engenders our capacity to experience the sublime in the first place. Yet that is exactly what got us into this age. The one image that you will not see in the show or its extensive catalogue, but that stands at the entryway to the Anthropocene, is the image of a mushroom cloud. It is an artifact that only photography could render both visible and manageable. Our need and desire to harness ever more energy is what gave us the Anthropocene. And from the snap of a shutter to DALL-E, energy capture is at the heart of not just what imaging technologies have been designed to do, but what they are.

All photography today is photography in the age of the Anthropocene, just as all images are, in some sense, of and about energy. The question that this show raises, but does not answer, is not how we make this energy visible—that much is apparent—but how we will manage it. This is what it would mean for photography, and the talented image-makers who wield it, to envision tomorrow.

—Jonathan T. D. Neil

LOS ANGELES

“World Without End: The George Washington Carver Project”

CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

Born into slavery in Missouri just one year shy of abolition, George Washington Carver (ca. 1864–1943) was only an infant when Confederate raiders kidnapped him and his mother, Mary, from the Carver

family farm where they were enslaved. The Carvers recovered George for the price of a prized steed, but his mother's fate remains unknown—one of the many unimaginable tragedies wrought by America's cardinal sin. The Carvers facilitated George's early education; he showed a keen interest in art, horticulture, and botany, and eventually attended Iowa Agricultural College (now Iowa State University), where he became the institution's first Black faculty member. His accomplishments were manifold: He was a noted artist, chemist, and expert mycologist, discovering many new species. He led the agriculture department at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for forty-seven years, publishing more than forty-three scientific bulletins on crop diversification and landscape restoration, and he invented novel uses for peanuts and other plants that helped restore an agricultural economy decimated by monocrop cotton farming (a reminder that, in addition to its human toll, the transatlantic slave trade also devastated regional ecologies).

"World Without End: The George Washington Carver Project," a PST ART exhibition curated by Cameron Shaw and Yael Lipschutz, situated Carver's creative and scientific legacies in the context of environmental sustainability—of which Carver was a radically early proponent. While the exhibition eschewed chronology in favor of "a constellation of ideas," according to a wall text, it seemed to unfold in a linear manner that conflicted with the configuration of the galleries. Nevertheless, this multifaceted and extensively researched exhibition offered illuminating artifacts and ephemera alongside a diverse group of thematically resonant contemporary works, the strongest of which engaged with Carver's legacy and philosophical worldview directly.

A collaborative installation by Karon Davis and Henry Taylor served as both a monument to and a surrogate for the exhibition's eponymous subject. In *George Washington Carver*, 2024, a nearly life-size figure crafted from bone-white plaster—Davis's signature material—grasps a painter's palette along with several brushes and gazes toward the viewer. Davis's sculptural simulacrum of Carver stood next to a large easel adorned with Taylor's painting "Call Her

Green," *Plant*, 2024, which depicts leafy collard greens against an earthen ground. Taken together, these works re-created a historical photograph of Carver standing next to an easel with a painting of lush stalky blooms, which—along with most of his other paintings—was destroyed by a fire in 1947. This collaborative rendition pointed to the acute tragedy of this loss, which haunted the exhibition like a specter. An adjacent gallery displayed several of Carver's surviving drawings and works on paper: a sailboat on a roiling sea, carefully rendered succulents, impressionistic landscapes, a row of soft peaches. All of these poetic vignettes revealed his subtle affinity for Romanticism. The material sensitivity and gestural dexterity of these works, displayed here alongside sketchbooks, weavings, and seed specimens from his lab and studio, rendered the loss of his paintings even more explicit.

Carver approached his research, whether artistic or scientific, with an experimental sensibility that underscored his dedication to the natural

world. His many alchemical investigations led to the creation of early bioplastics and of numerous pigments made from vernacular plants and soils, several of which he patented (his formula for Prussian blue, re-created by Amanda Williams, coated one of the gallery's walls). This material inquisitiveness also informed his work in mycology, here connected via an illuminating pairing to the mycological studies of John Cage, who similarly found creative and philosophical meaning in the improvisational practice of mushroom foraging. The inclusion of Candice Lin's *Xternesta (Memory)*, 2022, a work rooted in the study of the kudzu plant, was equally compelling. A glass table topped with beakers, ceramic vessels, photographs, tinctures, kudzu roots, and dried plant matter arranged by Lin suggested the eccentric laboratory of a tinkering scientist. Kudzu, a perennial vine native to Asia, was introduced to the American South in the nineteenth century as a method for remediating soil depleted by the overfarming of cotton—to devastating effect. Now considered invasive, kudzu further wounded strained ecosystems. Lin's work probes this socio-environmental history while also investigating the plant's potential as a source of bioplastic, much like Carver's work before her.

In the final gallery, Abigail DeVille's *Jesup Blessup*, 2024, served as a sculptural ode to one of Carver's most iconic and progressive projects, the Jesup Wagon—a nomadic education station that disseminated tools, seeds, and agricultural techniques to farmers in the South, empowering their relationship to the land. Here, a 1903 Studebaker covered wagon rests atop a glittering matrix of broken mirrors and celestial images, positioning Carver as a cosmological messenger tasked to heal and educate a broken planet.

—Jessica Simmons-Reid

Jacqueline Humphries

MATTHEW MARKS

In her recent exhibition of new work at Matthew Marks, her first at the gallery, Jacqueline Humphries proved that she is nothing if not ambitious. The paintings on view were extensions of the artist's recent technique of forcing paint onto canvas through laser-cut stencils. The resulting pictures contain layered images of dramatic "drips" and "splatters," a grid of tiny circles resembling Benday dots, and sans-serif renderings of the painting's title, most visible in bright yellow on black in the work *JH123*, 2024. Seen from across the room, this layering had the overall effect of making the picture resemble Abstract Expressionist canvases viewed through a scrim. The crisp edges of each stenciled splash and pour were subsumed by the insistent tone set by the gridded Benday dots, repeated in each instance to every edge of the painting.

Much like AbEx painting, these allover qualities work best at scale. Humphries's most successful works are the larger canvases, which are eight to nine feet high and slightly off square. Seen through the grid of static produced by the dots, the underpaintings in powdery pinks, viridian greens, and modernist reds, yellows, and blues are given space to blend into one another. In some instances, such as in *JH123* or *JH123*, both 2024, the grid is laid on last, the act of obscuring being the one that completes the painting. In "*Crimson Shatter*" and *JH456*, both 2024, this noise is set just beneath an edge-to-edge splatter of large blobs of paint that, in the case of "*Crimson Shatter*," resemble nothing so much as a spray of blood. Yet, particularly in this work, the even spacing and crisply stenciled edges of that overall splatter, the fact of its being so clearly unlike the thing it appears to be, unveil the strange dynamic at work in these paintings.

Even at a distance, the red splatters, especially when overlaid on black drips, are cartoonishly correct. Produced as a digital image and



George Washington Carver with painting, 1892. From "World Without End: The George Washington Carver Project."



Jacqueline Humphries,
JH123, 2024, oil on
linen, 10' 7" × 9' 6".

then laser-stenciled on before being painted, the marks are so unlike, say, Jackson Pollock's spindly ejaculations that they appear more like an idea and less like the outcome of a process: "blood" spilled on set rather than at the scene of a crime. Once seen as such, the effect held in viewing each of the paintings on display. The original appearance of expressive immediacy, physicality, or simply gravity was replaced by the rictus grin of a picture whose every inch is mediated, having passed through formats, files, and screens before arriving as paint on canvas. Humphries went so far as to provide a distinct, if oblique, confrontation with this fact in the juxtaposition of two works on adjoining walls in a small gallery. One, another painting also titled *JH123* ✨, 2024, consisted of a white ground upon which has been placed a large central matte-black smear of the kind Franz Kline or Adolph Gottlieb might have painted, accented by a distorted version of the work's title in deep red and gloss black. One could best apprehend the sheen on that gloss while turned to view the second work, a small enamel-on-PLA (plastic) relief: *Untitled*, 2025, which consists of a roughly hand-size version of the same matte-black shape seen in the larger painting, formatted as a 3D print rather than a stenciled canvas.

All of this, materially and aesthetically, appeared characteristic of our contemporary attempts to mediate the digital. Simultaneously, the underlying forms from which these paintings ultimately drew their visual world remained those of American painting after 1945. Yet what Humphries provided was a picture of the long distance traveled between then and now, and the ways in which our very subjectivity, once naively and bombastically available as gesture, is now as much an algorithmically mediated outcome as any sense of individual authorship or agency with which we contest such mediation.

Perhaps counterintuitively, the price Humphries's pictures must pay to succeed could be sensed in a series of framed aquatint prints done in collaboration with filmmaker Paul Schrader. These one-to-one reproductions of Schrader's handwritten film outlines document the systematized

if hastily scrawled notes detailing the image and plot progression from films such as *Raging Bull* (1980) and *First Reformed* (2017). The prints are interesting as idiosyncratic remnants of a moviemaking process, and, while they are clearly one means of organizing (composing, structuring, reasoning) a picture, they are obviously and ultimately not that picture. Just as the screenplay is not the film, the organization is not the image. Which raises the question, what are Humphries's paintings if not thoroughly, visibly organized? Painting's demise has been pompously announced many times over, and who knows if this prediction has proven true at any point? It is more intriguing to consider whether and how, when we see it, we will know it is dead.

—Red Cameron

Kelly Akashi

LISSON GALLERY

Long before one of the most devastating fires in the history of Los Angeles leveled artist Kelly Akashi's home and studio, she was preserving the interstices where destruction and creation meet in bronze, stone, steel, and glass. As one walked through Akashi's exhibition at Lisson Gallery, her first with the space, one quickly noticed the veil of velvety-gray ash and scaly-black patina on the bronze casts salvaged from the wreckage. Among the newly minted replicas of sculptures that couldn't be recovered were crimson borosilicate glass tendrils, oversize seed husks sprouting ornate leaf buds, and a wall-mounted ring of weathering steel sprigs. Taken together, the objects, new and old, envisioned and enacted nature's cyclical progression from degeneration to the promise of new life.

If the context lent urgency to the show, it was the artist's mastery of her materials that precipitated the feeling of irrevocability. Just outside the gallery, visitors were confronted by an astonishing true-to-size relief of Akashi's nude body emerging from a travertine pillar. The innumerable pockmarks constellating the surface of the stone can be interpreted as hollows yet to be filled—suggesting that the figure is still in the process of forming—or as early signs of its inevitable deterioration. The hardened wax from snuffed-out candles that spills from the lifted face and shoulders visualizes the presence of the past and animates questions concerning endurance and evanescence. What is the relationship



Kelly Akashi, *Witness*,
2024–25, Eaton
Fire-patinated cast
bronze, flame-worked
borosilicate glass,
12 × 11 × 5".

between a flame and a stone, and a stone and the earth to which it will ultimately return? In other words, what is the flicker of a human life to the ever-turning Earth?

Inside, four smaller stone sculptures were displayed atop oversize Cor-Ten steel stands, each sparsely adorned with chains, seeds, flowers, or hands cast in crystal, glass, or metal alloys. The abundance of negative space on the weathered tabletops suggested not austerity so much as a connectedness that extends beyond the means of representation. Emptiness was transformed into substance. Two of the sculptural slabs, *Monument*, 2025, composed of striated onyx, and *Monument (Home)*, 2024–25, crafted from pale alabaster, evoked ancient wayside shrines. Circular depressions, arched ingresses, and shallow shelves carved from the stones' lustrous interiors accommodated an array of votive offerings: rose-colored crystal fingers, patinated bronze pine cones, and heirloom doilies passed down to Akashi by her grandmother. The tension between the delicate linens and the various naturally occurring materials threw the different meanings of inheritance into stark relief. It's true: We carry forth human artifacts from the past but also humanity's impact upon the land.

Seedpods, scaled up to nearly the size of the stones, hung from the tabletops or spilled across the floor. Merging centuries-old craft techniques with modern technology, Akashi CT-scans seed husks and then 3D-prints them at larger-than-life proportions before preserving them in traditional lost-wax bronze casts. From the open pores of *Untitled (Datura Pod with Seeds)*, 2024–25, gilded silk cords ended in illuminated borosilicate glass blossoms.

Monument (Regeneration), 2024–25, a diaphanous sphere of latticed glass filaments in the center of the space, was representative of the apotheosis of Akashi's facility for handcraft. The work comprises intertwining crystalline threads that create the appearance of a rhizomatic root system from which a handful of exalted salt-white flowers sprout, their fallen petals littering the surface of the cylindrical steel pedestal that rises to present the sculpture at eye height to the viewer. Among other things, Akashi's oeuvre is a study of how forms and textures morph and multiply across materials, both organic and artificial, raw and refined. As the intricate open-weave needlework of the doilies reappears in the glass sphere's lattice, a similar pattern was reflected in the lines thatched upon the bronze palms in *Monument (Shelter)*, 2025, which includes Akashi's left and right hands touching fingers to wrists in the shape of a circle, a miniature datura pod nestled in the center. The gravity of the presentation was lightened by the

uncanny similarities between the Mexican agate set within the carved limestone archway in another work that shares the title *Monument*, 2025, and a scalloped coaster arrayed beneath it.

The intermingling of disembodied hands, severed digits, torn branches, and plucked petals in freestanding and wall-mounted works such as *Witness (Altadena)*, 2025, where a twig appears to spring from the distal pulp of the artist's middle finger, suggested that our limbs are akin to those of trees, or any other plant or animal appendage—composed of the self-same substance that similarly strives, proliferates, bends, breaks, degrades, and eventually gives way as the cycle begins anew. Nowhere was this better exemplified than in *Witness*, 2024–25, a flame-licked cast of the lower half of a face from which the glass stems of a burgeoning plant unfurl upward in search of light.

—Tara Anne Dalbow

Alex Israel

GAGOSIAN

What does it mean to mythologize Los Angeles, when myth is so much a part of the reality of the city? The question lies at the heart of Alex Israel's new paintings—a series of alluring, high-colored vignettes of “legendary” locations that include the Chateau Marmont, the Troubadour in West Hollywood, and the Union 76 gas station in Beverly Hills with its soaring, space-age canopy.

On first inspection, Israel's paintings seem uncomplicated—nocturnal vistas realized at panoramic proportions, as sealed and luminous as cinematic stills. The facade of the decades-old Hollywood Liquor blazes into the darkness of the boulevard; Pann's diner thrusts into the picture plane in hyperbolic perspective, a wedge of light against the blue night. Each picture offers a magic lantern of neon signage, gleaming sidewalks, and ionized air. But it's a vacant sort of wonderland, bereft of human characters other than the female mannequins of the Trashy Lingerie store.

In line with earlier series by Israel, the pictures were created by a scenic painter at Warner Brothers using both brush and airbrush. At a glance, some resemble photographic tableaux in the vein of Gregory Crewdson's moody, faux-cinematic constructions, and yet their hand-painted quality never quite recedes. We are dealing, the artist seems to insist, with constructed scenes—as though images conjured in dreams



Alex Israel, *Gas Station*, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 4' 6" x 11' 2". From the series "Noir," 2024.

had been fastidiously transcribed. Each painting began, tellingly, as a composite of sketches and photographs that was converted into a digital rendering—a blueprint that underwent countless, years-long revisions before being replicated in paint.

The resulting images are hardly less fictional, in their way, than the stock LA characters of Israel’s early video cycle *Rough Winds*, 2010, a reality TV–inspired mash-up that invited viewers to “follow the lives of jaded young adults as they navigate the golden light and melancholic shadows of life in the magical dreamscape of Los Angeles.” Here, however, the line between golden and melancholic was hard to gauge. There was an ambivalence of mood that came close, at points, to a sheer absence of one. The impersonal, illustrational style somehow fended off imaginative associations.

And yet that same technique, in its near obsolescence, offers a clue to the nostalgia that lurks just beneath the paintings’ high-gloss facades and rote replicative technique. Each image begs the question: When *was* this? The fuel prices in *Gas Station*, 2024, are lower than those of today, but then everything in the picture—from the pumps to the neo-Baroque marvel of Beverly Hills City Hall—has a whiff of yesteryear. The time of day, too, is unknowable: Either the magic hour or first light. Israel’s depiction of the Chateau Marmont might date from any time in the hotel’s history, but for the iPod advertisement that looms to one side, itself a retro throwback to the early 2000s.

Israel’s works can come across as affectless, and yet they deliver an undeniable retinal kick. There is something inescapably enticing about their cinemascope anamorphism and unreal palette. Like Warhol before him, Israel seems to inhabit a world of exquisite surfaces and radiant auras, and yet the potential for complexity isn’t wholly extinguished. It hovers, rather, like a charge in the air. Indeed, the artist seems fascinated more than anything by the capacity of the noir aesthetic—particularly its accentuated light and shade—to act as a kind of solvent for emotions, memories, and ideas. For all their sparkle, his paintings sublimate more than they express.

The works’ very status as paintings—as *art* in a gallery—aligns them, moreover, with the long tradition of *veduta* painting, that of architectural scenes that don’t necessarily demand forensic accuracy, edging sometimes into outright fantasy. To this extent, the flatness—the confected air—of Israel’s paintings are part of their slow-burn intrigue. His scenes of Los Angeles are, in Plato’s sense, images of images—seductive feints. Each portrays not the building or well-known vista per se, but the mirage-like *familiarity* of the thing in the artist’s mind, as well as the collective imagination of his city. When David Hockney first arrived in LA in the mid-1960s, he deduced from the sight of an unfinished freeway surging into the air that the city needed its own Piranesi. While Hockney intended that he should become that person (and surely did), Israel is, in his own nonchalant way, a successor to them both.

—James Cahill

“Reframing Dioramas: The Art of Preserving Wilderness”

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The curatorial team behind “Reframing Dioramas: The Art of Preserving Wilderness” at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum (NHM) argue that frozen, taxidermic scenes of natural habitats are not just a means of transmitting knowledge about distant environments. Instead, it presents them as vibrant spaces with their own histories of production, preservation, and information delivery, reflecting humanity’s changing



attitudes toward animals and informing discussions about conservation and mankind’s destructive impact on nature.

Organized as part of PST ART, the exhibition marks the centennial of the 1924 unveiling of the institution’s seventy-five natural-history dioramas and the reopening of a newly restored diorama hall that had been inaccessible since the 1980s. Amid this backdrop the curators have installed a selection of new commissions by local artists, as well as archival objects, documents, and photographs pertaining to the history of NHM’s dioramas. The exhibition navigates scientific logic and untamed daydreams, offering ways to consider the role of dioramas in the museology of the twenty-first century. Mostly, it emphasizes that the idea of creating an authentic sample of the world through such displays has always been a fantasy.

Inside the newly unveiled gallery, dioramas of the kind one would expect at a natural-history museum are, of course, present. In one, a snow leopard from Nepal appears frozen in place as if just having killed a male pheasant. At the entrance, a taxidermied caracal leaps to catch birds against a painted backdrop of trees and mountains underneath pink clouds, here shown next to a bookcase display of fossils and animal skeletons—the scene’s momentum is met by the quiet presence of the preserved remains. Nearby, a projected video documents the opening of storage doors to reveal shelves and drawers containing the materials used to conserve animals for research. A vitrine is set in front of a projection displaying a cactus wren and a Mohave ground squirrel—two species that have since disappeared from Los Angeles. The displays of these specimens, collected by NHM one hundred years ago, seem to illustrate the need for the persistent and thoughtful preservation of the animals in the face of ongoing waves of displacement and regional extinction.

The new commissions introduce advanced technologies to the space, as the artists were charged with appropriating the format, style, and presentation of the diorama to new ends. Lauren Schoth’s *Ever-Changing Flow*, 2024, uses short throw projections to cast a scene onto the rear walls of a diorama space. The scene compresses the evolution of the Los Angeles River from its earliest natural condition to its current existence as a tunnel of concrete, as if seen from the Verdugo Wash confluence near Griffith Park. The view is framed by mounted owls staring toward the river, witnesses to the extreme changes depicted. The work explores human intervention and its aftermath, demonstrating how the lush river lost more than 90 percent of its habitat due to channelization prompted by floods.

Utilizing recycled materials, projections, moving lights, and sculptural objects, *Special Species: A Delicate Moment in Time*, 2024, by Jason Chang (aka RFX1), Joel Fernando, and Yesenia Prieto merges

Mule deer diorama, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 2014. From “Reframing Dioramas: The Art of Preserving Wilderness.” Photo: Mario de Lopez.

scientific discoveries with Mexican folklore, drawing attention to dioramas as a model for preserving traditions and highlighting the spirituality many cultures experience in relation to natural phenomena. At the center of the display, a small staircase leads to a gate and a crumbling brick wall surrounded by rows of trees, flowers, and *alebrijes*—fantastical Mexican figurines resembling hybrids of animals in neon colors. Above are psychedelic skies, made of moving images of butterflies, a howling wolf, and celestial bodies, like a rave at the entryway to the spirit domain. This portal is meant to lead, protect, and heal species in danger of extinction as they journey to the afterworld. California is presented here as an ecosystem shaped by natural forces and collective imaginations from both sides of the border.

There's a certain excitement in entering a darkened diorama hall and encountering video projections, neon colors, or data about extinction rates. Although the exhibition seems to strain a bit in its efforts to revisit dioramas, it shares a compelling narrative about the relevance of the form as an educational tool to depict humanity's ever-changing relationships with nature. The dioramas might seem removed from our current cataclysmic existence, but the scenes are not mute replicas; rather, they remind us how chaos, confusion, fear, and resilience are innate to nature and our experience in the world. Put simply, the exhibition acknowledges how dioramas—and the institutional systems that produced them—shaped an idealized view of the natural world and deepened categorical divisions between what was deemed “wild” and the forces of reason. These divisions in turn led to the violent subjugation of nature.

—Rotem Rozental

TORONTO

Stephen Andrews

PAUL PETRO CONTEMPORARY ART

Stephen Andrews's forty-year career has taken many twists and turns. But one thread that runs through it all is a preoccupation with how pictures are mediated. Working from photographs of his subjects, Andrews put together an exhibition of paintings at Paul Petro, “Some Stories,” that featured a vast selection of portraits reflecting his engagement with mosaic. (He had recently completed a luminous ceramic mural for the Canadian Embassy in Paris.) The artist builds up his compositions with tessera-like applications of paint, creating each block with a single stroke of the brush.

The show included a grouping of striking male nudes, among them *Cole*, 2023, a rendering of the artist Cole Swanson. Seated on a stool in Andrews's studio, Swanson looks rather longingly to the side, displaying his muscular physique for the lens (and eventually the brush) with confidence. In this portrayal, Andrews's painted units become rather diminutive when depicting Swanson's chest and bearded chin. Does the similarity of Andrews's marks to pixelation—i.e., digital processes of formation and definition—indicate the artist's aesthetic preferences? Or is he alluding to forms of AI and recognition software whose purpose is to detect traits that may cater to, say, a user's preferences on a dating app? Andrews is a painter who happens to have a long commitment to queer activism, and the analog setting of his workspace operates here in tension with a parallel realm of online personas and profiles, where fact and fantasy blend. In the virtual world, of course, information (mis)identifying people is perused in ways that are increasingly without empathy or careful attention. In a sense, Andrews labors to rehumanize his subjects, as they are not products that can be so easily categorized and instrumentalized. Affection, in his case, degrades the cold calculation of the algorithm.



Stephen Andrews,
La grasse matinée,
2023, oil on canvas,
48 × 34".

La grasse matinée, 2023, is a more intimate picture, presenting the artist's longtime partner, filmmaker John Greyson, who appears in bed, under the covers and semi-awake. Much of the roughly four-by-three-foot composition is taken up by a veritable landscape of sheets and pillows executed in sundry shades of gray and white, which highlight the contours of the subject's body—the artist invites us to linger over this private site of pleasure and rest. The size of the brushstrokes diminishes as one gets closer to Greyson's face—the marks frame his features in a manner recalling those depictions of tulle or lace collars in seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture. And yet Greyson's likeness exudes warmth rather than starched restraint. His visage is made up of various pinks and browns, each mark bearing slightly raised edges, a seductively tactile trait that variously makes the image appear translucent or reflective (such qualities optically cohere when seen from a distance). The painting brought to mind Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *Untitled*, 1991, a large-scale, black-and-white photograph of an empty (but obviously shared) bed. While Andrews's work does not serve the same commemorative purpose (remembering a deceased lover), it does offer a sense of mystery, evoking the kinds of memories that are difficult to summon, describe, or even face.

Another large-scale work is *Salon*, 2018–23, comprising forty-four small paintings that depict Andrews's own community: a selection of those he admires and identifies with. Included in this piece, however, is a self-portrait of the artist in a hospital bed, bare-chested and hooked up to machines—the picture underlines the notion that his existence is supported and surrounded by people who inspire him to persevere and persist. To pay tribute to them, Andrews strays from conventional iconographic strategies of portraiture (books, animals, lavish appointments, etc.) designed to elevate someone's importance or status. Rather, he encourages productive speculation about the difficulty involved in doing expressive justice to people we feel truly indebted to. The artist's likenesses signify both a deeply felt affection for his subjects and the inability of any single medium to faithfully and fully describe them.

—Dan Adler

MEXICO CITY

Ana Hernández

CAMPECHE

Though soil found a privileged place within some of the major artistic developments of the second half of the twentieth century, Land art did not deal much with mud. Maybe that's because such a debasing component—awakening associations with uncleanness, filth, impurity, and excess—would have tarnished Land art's sanitized aesthetics, with its links to Conceptual art. By contrast, many non-Western worldviews consider mud a generative element. Humankind is born out of it in Andean, Māori, Mayan, and Yoruba cosmologies, and, as the basis for construction, mud has led to the development of entire cities. This positive valence of the viscous mixture is more palpable in twenty-first-century artistic production, perhaps thanks to a drive to include non-Western cultures that were previously cast aside.



Ana Hernández, *LADI BEÑE* (Skin of Mud), 2024–25, HD video, color, sound, 3 minutes 25 seconds.

Ana Hernández's exhibition "*Ladi beñe*" (Skin of Mud, in the Zapotec language of southern Mexico) featured paintings and sculptures that evidence the chromatic similarity of gold and soil, subtly yet convincingly insinuating their comparable importance. The Binnizá or Zapotec people—particularly those who inhabit the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, from where Hernández hails—conceive of gold as a sort of solar flotsam, an ejection of the sun's matter on earth and therefore a sacred material, but earth is equally significant in their thought. As the source of sustenance, soil is commonly honored through rituals seeking fertility. *LU' / Ojo derecho y ojo izquierdo* (LU' / Right Eye and Left Eye) (all works 2024–25), a striking pair of gilded wood sculptures that evoke a hypnotic stare, stress the preciousness of the precious metal, while the landscape created in the canvas *Juego de niños* (Children's Game) suggests instead its earthly nature: Thanks to the spotted golden hues on the cracked surface of dried mud, it seems to sprout from the ground. To make this work, Hernández sifted the soil so finely that it resembles sand. The work's materiality is paramount, and this emphasis on physical substance was apparent in Hernández's other medium-format canvases made of compressed soil and water—mud. While *El Lodo* (Mud), for example, showed it plain and flat, in *binniza* it serves as the surface from which language emerges, carrying a text in relief, a Zapotec phrase meaning "Sow the tongue, cloud people." Or it can

hear the imprint of objects that maintain the community's everyday life, as in *Cruje* (Creaks), which carries, as if engraved into its surface, the silhouette of a fishing net.

Bixhia', a golden sculpture of a sawfish covered by a net, hung at the center of the gallery. Though the press release called this work the exhibition's core, I would accord that role to *LADI BEÑE*, a performance shown in a video. Both works refer to the *son del pescado*, a dance in which men, exclusively, wear a carcass of the sawfish and dance to the tune of a *son*, a traditional musical genre. However, in *LADI BEÑE*, it is the female artist we see wearing the sawfish carcass—now gold-plated—and on a sowing field. Hernández's rendition of the dance grows frantic, thoroughly soaking her white skirt and naked torso in mud. While it was tempting to ascribe the work to a tradition of feminist performance art, the music reinserts it into Zapotec terrain. It is a reinsertion similar to the one experienced by the artist's mother (according to Abraham Cruzvillegas's exhibition text) the last time she crossed the border from Mexico into the United States, reconnecting to the land by getting covered in mud in the parking lot of a Texas shopping mall.

—Fabiola Iza

LAGOS

Sikelela Owen

TIWANI CONTEMPORARY

Sikelela Owen's exhibition "Where My Gaze Falls" examined Black subjectivity and class consciousness through images of leisure in contemporary urban life. The genealogy of Owen's iconographic and figurative choices is twofold: On the one hand, she draws from nineteenth-century French painters such as Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet; on the other, she engages with the imaginative approaches of contemporary artists such as African American painter Kerry James Marshall and Black British artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

The most revealing pictures in "Where My Gaze Falls," if not in Owen's painting practice so far, are those that draw on these influences and focus on city dwellers enjoying themselves in green space. *Boys in the Park* (*Eli & Kaiden*) (all works 2024), depicts two kids lying down on a mat on the grass, their poses reminiscent of those in Courbet's *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine* (*Summer*), 1857, but also in Marshall's *Past Times*, 1997, and Yiadom-Boakye's *Oral Chapters*, 2010. In all four works, working-class city dwellers are portrayed taking respite in nature, away from routine domestic or work life. Both Marshall and Yiadom-Boakye have talked about wanting to psychologize the figures in their paintings. Marshall has spoken of a mission to "give back to the subject in the picture their own psychology," one that is independent of the viewer's thoughts or motives. Yiadom-Boakye, recalling her admiration of Lisa Yuskavage's portraits, described how they struck

Sikelela Owen, *Nadene & Kaiden* (*Lloyd Park*), 2024, oil on canvas, 35½ × 23½".



her as being about “a personal experience or about something psychological.” Likewise, Owen, a Black Londoner of Jamaican and Zimbabwean heritage, consistently imbues her figures with a psychology of their own.

The cues are apparent: Six of the eleven displayed works in “Where My Gaze Falls” depict toddlers and school-age children playing amid greenery, while two others, *Nadene & Kaiden (Lloyd Park)* and *The Thomas Family in the Park*, show mothers sitting in the same kind of environment and tending to their toddlers. The subjects’ gazes are deflected from the viewer, except in *Poolside (Aliyah & Layah)*, which depicts two school-age girls sitting in identical postures opposite each other, their faces turned to the viewer. “I am literally piecing together lives and building a narrative of people I don’t know,” said Owen in a 2021 interview, “such as my great-grandparents who settled in Jamaica.” Any sense of the substance and tenor of the figures’ conversations and preoccupations is circumscribed by what the viewer is coaxed into imagining as idle, leisurely chatter in a serene environment.

What conveys the carefree tone of those conversations is the eloquent painterliness with which they are depicted: broad and loose brushstrokes, masses of color, nuances of light or shade that—when coupled with her restricted palette of muted greens, browns, whites, and the occasional pool of yellow—create an unsettled, dynamic quality. In *Horseplay Battersea Park (Eli & Ethan)*, Owen’s quasi-impressionistic flair allows her to depict a young boy’s undershirt as no more than a mist. Where Owen falters, however, is in her overuse of drips and splashes to emphasize her evolving painterliness. In some of the paintings here, the fluidity of forms and color placement is weakened by ostentatious drips that come across as distracting flourishes. By placing figures of real-life relatives in idyllic, pastoral backgrounds, Owen underscores the essential nature of rest and respite for Black working-class urbanites.

—Sabo Kpade

CAPE TOWN

Sue Williamson

IZIKO SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL GALLERY

In the courtyard of the Iziko South African National Gallery hangs *Messages from the Moat*, 1997, an artwork featuring fourteen hundred glass bottles, some suspended in a fishing net and dripping with water, others in the pit below. Each bottle is inscribed with the name, place of birth, and sale price of an enslaved person brought to Cape Town between 1658 and 1700. This weeping installation serves as an entry point to “There’s Something I Must Tell You,” Sue Williamson’s first retrospective exhibition.

Williamson’s work, moving among printmaking, photography, video, drawing, and installation, engages the shifting social and political landscape. From precolonial times through the apartheid era—when Williamson, who was born in England in 1941, began practicing, first as a journalist and then as an artist—to the early and later years of South Africa’s democracy, the exhibition reads like a timeline of the country’s local histories of dispossession. It comes at a time when dialogues around freedom have gotten both more complex and frustratingly hollowed out. Themes of memory, remembrance, recurrence, and repetition course through Williamson’s work, with some series adopting an activist modality.

One of the most striking works, and perhaps the most difficult to digest, is *R.I.P. Annie Silinga*, 1995/2025. In it Williamson re-creates a grave marker in the form of a cradle, made for the anti-apartheid leader who was involved in the 1956 Women’s March against apartheid pass



laws and who died in 1984. The work was first exhibited at the Johannesburg Biennale in 1995 and later placed at Silinga’s grave site in Langa; later it was stolen and the metal sold for scrap. Here in the hollow halls of Iziko, this work feels strange and out of place. It makes me think of monuments, but the bad kind, the ones that concretize and “firm up” ideas and ideals, however well-meaning they may be. It’s a strange contrast with the fleeting gestures of vulnerability that tell a more complex story elsewhere in Williamson’s oeuvre.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the new work *Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying*, 2024, an installation featuring six chairs arranged facing each other in a circle, on a platform that mirrors the scattered remnants of District Six today, an empty land where homes were demolished and never replaced. With shards of grass poking out of cracked concrete, the chairs are surrounded by a powerful soundscape of voices—recordings of former residents recalling their past lives in the land from which more than sixty thousand people were forcibly removed during apartheid. The chairs, a significant material emblem, were given to the artist by the Ebrahim family, anti-apartheid activists who owned one of the last few homes left standing in District Six. The artist worked extensively with the family on the series “Last Supper at Manley Villa,” 1981–2008, documenting the home of Naz and Hari Ebrahim just days before it was demolished as part of the forced removals. Like the famous 1964 song “Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying,” which speaks of hope and healing, the work carries a dual sense of heartbreak and optimism.

Williamson’s work is centered on justice, yet as I walked through the exhibition, I found myself struggling to fully grasp what the word means. Land justice, retributive justice, restorative justice? These complex concepts involve ethical, legal, emotional, and psychological dimensions. What shape should justice take, and what is the artist’s role, if any, in shaping it? Legal scholar Martha Minow suggests that justice involves replacing “violence with words and terror with fairness” and navigating a “path between too much memory and too much forgetting.” Williamson’s works, at the very least, warn us vigorously against “too much forgetting.” This retrospective then seems an important part of a broader archive that will ensure that histories are not erased.

—Nkgopoleng Moloi

Sue Williamson, *Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying*, 2024, chairs, concrete, gravel, brick fragments, wood, fabric, grass, six channel audio. Installation view. Photo: Nigel Pamplin.

LONDON

Matthias Groebel

MODERN ART

Matthias Groebel's exhibition "Skull Fuck" featured three of the television paintings he made between 1989 and 2001, along with three new monochromes, a trancey video, and two multipanel paintings from the early 2000s. Preserving pastness, the television canvases now broadcast nostalgia. The series emerged from the advent of twenty-four-hour, private satellite broadcasting in West Germany in 1984. Unprecedented access to a thick flow of roguish programming gave the Cologne-based artist, surfing at night, the subjects of these works in which snowy apparitions return through pointillist static with a distinctive gravelly sheen. With a glint in her cathode-blue eye, the woman in *untitled*, 1992, is a fascination of pewtery pixilation. Who is she? A half-tone honeytrap, a

lonely punctum, an orphaned siren whose doleful gaze bores into a classified beyond? A déclassé Greta Garbo, whose visage Roland Barthes venerated as "a moment of transition . . . an Idea"? In any case, this unnamed *she* is an effaced *someone*, hazed by the freeze of efflorescing electrons.

Desiring "a clean path from the electronic signal to the canvas," Groebel fashioned his own painting machine in 1989, a decade before the widespread adoption of multicolor plotters. A Fischertechnik painting toy was its skeleton structure, which Groebel modified by assembling it vertically, scaling up its surface area, and replacing the toy's original pencil with an airbrush. In cyberpunk spirit, Groebel robotized the apparatus with salvaged detritus: windshield wipers, plastic rollers, and bike chains. Select footage was then processed through software that converted analog signals to digital pixels that could be sprayed in acrylic, dot by dot, across the canvas. But con-

sider: Such a machine demands tender maintenance. It does not fetishize the abdication of the hand so much as ventriloquize, to lushly narcotized effect, the very technicalities of painterly dexterity.

As television broadcasters shifted to subscription models in the early 2000s, Groebel returned to his own photographs and videos as source material. The vertical triptych *virgins*, 2002–2003, features tightly cropped images of shelved skulls whose cavities are shrouded by embroideries, their craniums exposed. Displayed in individual niches and bordered at the right by golden scrollwork, the skulls appear as hallowed yet anonymized relics. Here, the gauzy texturing of Groebel's machine deftly captures the atmosphere of stale temporality. Dank chiaroscuro intermingles with filmy blue, lending the composition a moldered delicacy that exacerbates the impression of senescence while assuring fidelity to its lensed source. It's a lossy, nauseous, and time-worn iridescence accomplished by liaising machines. Conceived from video stills, the nine-paneled *collective memories*, 2003, multiplies surfaces as dissonant interfaces with entropic translucency. Reflections spectrally overlay a proto-humanoid skeleton in a natural-history museum, with vitreous passages of calcium yellows and Hammershoiseque shadows. The surgeons in *untitled*, 2000, backlit by the chronic

glare of halogens, peer into the canvas's center: With perception itself under operation, the painting-body hacks the viewer.

Three fractalized monochromes (all *untitled*, 2024) originating in analog photographs of street life—roughly painted panels of pink, green, and turquoise—are encrusted with diagramming lines. To make these works, a scanner rendered Groebel's photographs into datasets, each comprising tens of thousands of points, and an algorithm directed colored pens to connect set points. These optimized paths sketch themselves into tortuous obscurity: Densities of vermiculation imply a sunlit skull, planar surfaces, and abstracted architectures, while hyperactivities of black describe a texting figure and clustering foliage. Addling the eye, exhaustive hi-res ultimately ensures the paintings' encryption. Unlike Groebel's other works with their absorbing torpidity, these paintings nevertheless provide an alternate view of his informatic materialism: strategized line work as algorithmic craquelure.

Groebel's necromantic technics shows a wicked empathy for digital desuetude. These are paintings of electrical traces and lo-res lyricisms with results glacially indeterminate. Continual transitoriness—transmitting, receiving, translating—imparts solemnity for incognito presences slipping from view, allowing that what touches us deepest is likely already lost, or wholly numbs us to its contact.

—Alex Bennett

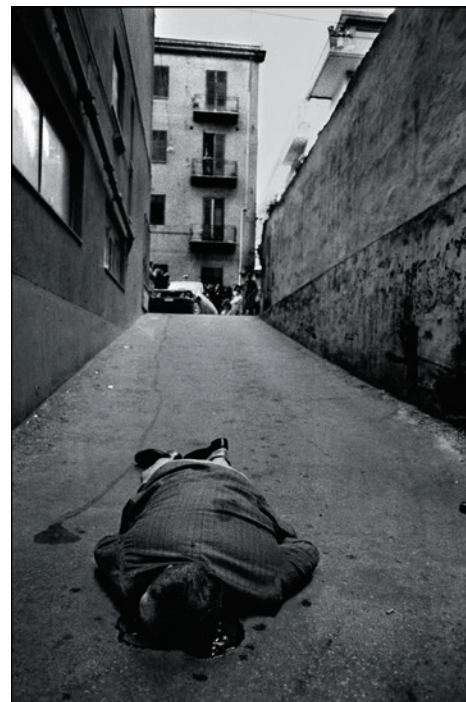
Letizia Battaglia

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

Letizia Battaglia's crime-scene photographs reflect our complex fascination with images of death and their presence in the media. Documenting the aftermath of violent, Mafia-related murders in the streets of Palermo, Italy, between 1976 and 1991 for the daily newspaper *L'Ora*, Battaglia's images exist between factual narrative and popular culture's fascination with fictional murderers. Battaglia's hauntingly beautiful compositions demand viewers face the fact that death can be a casual matter, and, while doing so, they encapsulate the relationship between local news outlets—a primary source of information in the pre-internet world—and media consumers. In that sense, the images observe the gradual demise of their own medium.

Curated by Paolo Falcone, "Life, Love and Death in Sicily" was the artist's first major exhibition in the UK. Born in Palermo in 1935, she began working as a freelance writer in 1969, and in the early 1970s she separated from her husband. With her daughters she moved back from Milan to the Sicilian regional capital to become photography director for *L'Ora*, but she found the city trapped in a war between Cosa Nostra bosses. The six hundred thousand images she took while working for the paper compose an expansive archive of the economy of random death that took shape in Palermo. In a video interview on display, Battaglia declares that she was "looking for liberty and freedom in all." By the time she died in 2022, she was an award-winning photojournalist, an environmental activist, a member of Palermo's

Letizia Battaglia, *È stato ucciso mentre andava in garage a prendere la macchina* (He was killed on his way to the garage to get his car), 1976, ink-jet print, 19% × 23%.



Matthias Groebel, *untitled*, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 39% × 27½%.

city council, and a defender of women's rights. Battaglia is often compared to American photojournalist Weegee for his candid depiction of crime scenes in Manhattan. Although she shares his sense of visual drama, bold lines, and unexpected compositions, Battaglia differs in her insistence on social advocacy. Perhaps like the Mexican photographer Enrique Metinides, Battaglia brings both the victims and the criminals close to the viewer, producing frames that are both intimate and horrifying.

In the video, Battaglia shares her struggle with seeing so much death and capturing it for others; she speaks of avoiding thoughts about pain and wanting to burn her negatives. It was as if she could hear the crinkling sound of plastic burning, she adds, yearning to rid her images of their beauty. Paradoxically, this visual death wish informs the heightened energy emanating from her pictures. One can almost feel Battaglia's frustration as she documented the doings of criminals and the magistrates and officers who hunted them (and sometimes were killed in the process), alongside the civic community that was forced to accept cruel disruptions as brute facts of life. In an image from 1980, a barefoot woman dressed in black is being held by police officers as she sobs and yells; her visible pain contrasts with the composed demeanor of the men surrounding her. "Three killers murdered the owner of the Hotel Riva Smeralda," the label notes. "The woman, not knowing who was killed, thinks it was her son." Another image, from 1976, captures the exchange of gazes in a murder scene: A dead body lies on the ground in a garage walkway, trapped between the street, a gaping public far in the distance, and the camera, which looks down from a position almost above the man's bleeding head. The photographer (and we, her work's viewers) observe the spectacle of the gawkers observing a spectacle of the corpse, recognizing one another's troubling presence and insatiable curiosity.

Organized in collaboration with her archive, the exhibition, spread across two floors, featured an extensive array of photographs, videos, negatives, and documents—including threatening letters from angry mafiosi. The volume of objects and their display (one gallery was occupied by rows of photographs suspended from the ceiling) expressed both the overwhelming propinquity of the mundane with the unbearable, as well as Battaglia's own restlessness and passion. The exhibition conveyed the crushing visual saturation Battaglia experienced daily: Crime scenes are flanked by images of religious holidays and receptions for the nobility, young people enjoying themselves, or lovers on the beach. Mourners on the street are equated with devotees in churches, and black-clad widows are juxtaposed with pop stars. The cacophony of scenes and events taints banal incidents with deep foreboding. In this economy of violence, pain and loss possess even the happiest of moments.

—Rotem Rozental

PARIS

Michael E. Smith GALERIE CRÈVECŒUR

Framed by white metal doors with barred windows, a glove hung from a bent wire attached to the ventilation duct above. Quivering, it bounced to the hollow whirring of the machine. The rhythmic pulsing of this disembodied synthetic hand, *Untitled* (all works 2025), manifested the otherwise invisible internal operations of the infrastructure, the feeble coursing vitality of the building as it worked for the comfort of the humans inside.

The artist had most of the tube lights overhead switched off, and the gallery was tinged with a steely-gray light under the interminably



cloudy sky of a Parisian winter. At first the exhibition felt almost abandoned, as if nothing were there. Aside from that blanched glove, all that was immediately visible were three semi-inflated green basketballs suspended in a corner (*Peas*), and a television stand covered in pink fleece (*Untitled*, like most of the works in the show) to the left under a skylight. Emptiness is part of the work for Michael E. Smith; his sparse site-specific interventions use a mundane materiality to activate alternate states of perception by cultivating a hypervigilance to the in-between. Working with overlooked parts of the gallery, he brings attention to forgotten corners and makes visible the otherwise unnoteworthy. He offers a slow reveal in which the work exhibits the building as much as the building exhibits the work.

Smith has a distinct process for exhibition-making. He prepares at home in his Rhode Island studio, collecting found objects, often free castoffs. Sometimes he employs decommissioned taxidermy or dried puffer fish; often, as in this show, defunct technology and worn synthetic materials dominate. The aesthetic is at once tender and dystopian, and immediately human: a contemporary archaeology of late capitalism. He spends hours and days experimenting with the relationships and assemblages of these objects, developing what he calls the "alphabet" he will use to write his exhibition. Then he brings the materials and spends several days—in this case seven—creating in situ, in intimate dialogue with the space. He works overnight when the gallery is silent and he can focus: honing and refining, arranging and reducing, tightening and editing.

The found objects embody a nexus of references, symbols, and associations that together evoke the Freudian uncanny. They feel at once familiar and strange, with a mournful tinge. Smith seems to be working with the detritus of the unconscious, gathering and repurposing the pollution of the contemporary psyche, messy with endless consumption. On the floor, tucked behind the layered pink fleece, is another work, a semilucid dream of two deflated Beavis and Butt-Head rubber masks, one of them illuminated from within by fairy lights.

Smith places his references with Lynchian precision in a Minimalist context that uses geometry and emptiness to induce a vortex of attention. He engages material intently, distilling focus past the point of discomfort, when, as he put it in a 2023 interview, "the meaningful world just kind of unfolds in front of you." In the same interview, he likened his relationship with his materials to the familiarity that makes

Michael E. Smith,
Untitled, 2025,
masks, LED lights,
1% × 33% × 14%".
Photo: Martin
Argyroglo.

it impossible to describe one's mother: The more intimate we are, the more language slips away.

At the entrance to the back office, a large box wrapped in red foil was placed on the floor. This gift was not to be unwrapped, but it hinted at the secret layers to the exhibition. Knowing that the artist often exhibits in inaccessible places, I asked if there were works on the roof or in the basement. I was guided to pieces hidden in drawers and cabinets. Their pointillistic placement in dialogue with the architecture dissolves the boundary between work and nonwork; the whole atmosphere comes to feel charged. In a cupboard between cardboard file boxes and a printer, a halved basketball reveals an interior lined with copper pennies. Between a painting by the artist's son and a ghostly sculpture with a suspended white shirt, a half-empty French press by the bookshelf also suddenly felt like art.

—Allyn Aglaia

LISBON

Vivian Suter

MUSEUM OF ART, ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Artists have turned painting inside out and outside in, in nearly every way imaginable. Its death has been endlessly prophesized, even as it rules the market. Do painters harbor an anxiety that we don't pay sufficient attention to their art in the age of hyperdistraction? Must painting flirt with spectacle to survive in the attention economy? One option is to attempt an exit from these cultural circumstances. Having studied painting in Basel and exhibited in Europe, Vivian Suter in 1983 made a significant life change, relocating to the town of Panajachel, near Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. She has lived and worked in a former coffee plantation within that largely Indigenous community ever since—a choice



View of "Vivian Suter: Disco," 2024–25.
Photo: Daniel Malhão.

that has been celebrated as signifying resistance to the hegemonic, globalized art world.

But while Suter inhabits a place seemingly removed from mass culture's visual extravaganzas, she does engineer a different sort of spectacle by aggregating large numbers of paintings for her exhibitions. Suter's recent show "Disco" was a case in point: Comprising more than five hundred paintings made over the past decade installed in the capacious Oval Gallery at the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT), it was a striking agglomeration, what might be described as an all-painting *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Her predominantly abstract (and some semiabstract) paintings, inflected with biomorphic shapes that hint at the life-forms of her surroundings, were amassed to form an installation-like environment. Much has been made of Suter's anti-method painting method, which is all about immersion within her biome. Some paintings are made outdoors and may be left for weeks or months to be altered by rain, mud, flora, and fauna—even by her dogs. Residues of dirt, leaves, and other elements can be discerned in some of the works. Suter apparently welcomes this loss of control, allowing the elements to finish the work. In MAAT's exhibition brochure, we observe images of the artist walking through her verdant environs, paintings scattered about the forest floor, covered in leaves, mud, and other organic material. You might say that Suter has taken plein air painting to its logical extreme; perhaps she has an inadvertent affinity with Jackson Pollock's "I am nature." Harold Rosenberg famously said about Abstract Expressionism: "What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event." In Suter's case, maybe the *event* happens in that interstitial space between when she ceases working on a painting and the Guatemalan forest takes over. However, this is not really painting as a site-specific practice, as some have suggested.

At MAAT, the majority of paintings were tacked up, unstretched, on various walls and levels of the circular rotunda, with works often overlapping in informal, irregular grids. There were no wall labels. A few paintings occupied the floor, while others were suspended from the ceiling, or installed on wood and metal racks suggesting storage structures. Hanging art from the rafters does not necessarily make an exhibition more compelling, perhaps just more theatrical, like a stage set. Moving around the show, one continuously read the plethora of works in an intertextual or relational way—a stimulating experience animated by Suter's lively use of vibrant yellows, pinks, blues, greens. Maybe Suter prefers that we become immersed in the entire forest of paintings, rather than being distracted by the individual trees. Her paintings have a playful spontaneity, a calculated rawness, perhaps even an arch naivete, but something irritatingly unresolved about the works left one desiring a more complex kind of unfinishedness. One humorous painting was more intriguing: Suspended, banner-like, on the upper level of the space, the word ABSTRACTION appeared, as if Suter were acknowledging, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, that abstraction is a language. But while viewing Suter's show, I kept imagining what it would be like to see the works of five hundred different painters in this immense space, which might be a smart way for the MAAT to follow up on this one-person show of some five hundred paintings.

—Joshua Decter

ROME

David Schutter

MAGAZZINO

I first saw David Schutter's new paintings in near darkness thanks to an unexpected power outage. As my vision adjusted to the dimmed space, Schutter's delicately chromatic paintings slowly emerged. They

were even especially luminous in this context. Their surfaces shimmered like those of old-master and Romantic paintings, which were never intended to be lit artificially by more than oil lamp or candlelight—paintings such as John Constable’s *The Admiral’s House in Hampstead*, also known as *The Grove*, 1822, upon which Schutter drew for the four works in this show, “Neighbors.” Constable, acutely aware of how the appearance of his paintings changed at different times of day and in different atmospheric conditions, preferred to paint and look by daylight—and purposively varied the application of glazes and opaque pigments to enliven his paintings’ surfaces.

Constable provided Schutter with ready-made parameters within which to work. His paintings, although they bear no evident likeness to Constable’s, are identical in scale with *The Admiral’s House in Hampstead*, are based upon its composition, and have been wrought using similar materials and techniques—knowledge derived from careful study of the painting in situ at the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin as well as research into Constable’s working methods and the history of the painting’s subject and its reception. In the studio, working from memory, Schutter painted according to Constable’s academic procedure—applying an umber ground to his canvases, then laying in the sky with broad strokes, proceeding downward to build an image from background to foreground, and later adding, working, and reworking layers of detail. Yet, unlike Constable’s picture, Schutter’s abstractions are but vague semblances of Constable’s image of the view from his home at 2 Lower Terrace near Hampstead Heath, London. The paintings, which are fashioned of a deliberate array of varied marks made in muted ochers and cool grays, are sensual objects that reward the gaze but also stimulate the thinking of those who ruminate upon them—and the art of painting—more broadly.

Advocacy for a return to the instructional methods and value systems of the Royal Academy Schools as they were when Constable

studied there would not be well received today. Yet Schutter—who trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and is one of the rare artists still to have a material relationship to the tradition of academic painting—shows us what it might look like to paint academically as a critical practice. In allowing Constable to determine the format, basic composition, and materiality of his paintings, Schutter is free to focus on rendering the spatial dynamics and volumes he recognizes in *The Admiral’s House in Hampstead* and, as importantly, to grapple with its more insidious aspects. Schutter’s choice of *this* painting was not made innocently. He knows that the Admiral’s House in which Constable’s neighbor lived is so called for its mistaken association with Admiral Matthew Barton, an officer of the Royal Navy who, before retiring to bucolic Hampstead, was instrumental to Great Britain’s forceful opening of the seas to trade (in goods and people) in the Caribbean and along the coast of West Africa. Though they may not be apparent on the lush surface of Constable’s painting, the kingdom’s expansionist desires to control territory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries underlie *The Admiral’s House in Hampstead*, as they do the emergence of landscape painting more generally. Schutter’s eye may have been first caught by the appearance of Constable’s painting, but its extra-aesthetic qualities helped sustain his extended engagement with it—as did the fraught history of a group of drawings by Max Liebermann that were discovered in 2012 among the trove of art (some of it looted) in Cornelius Gurlitt’s Munich apartment, on which Schutter based his 2017 “Liebermann Suite” of drawings. With his presentation of new work in Rome, he just might be showing us how to paint historically.

—Jeffrey Saeleznik

MILAN

Tarek Atoui

PIRELLI HANGARBICOCCA

Tarek Atoui says he doesn’t consider his work openly political. “My work is oneiric,” he says. He communicates through the medium of sound, as a musician working in the context of contemporary art. An unapologetic sense of belonging to both worlds is underscored by decades of assiduous study and by collaborations with global spaces and players. The choreography of his Milan show—a chamber of musical instruments keyed to hum on their own—is further activated by live performances. But Atoui’s artistic presentation relies not only on musical but also on artistic forebears. If anything, his sprawling installation recalls the landmark environments in Harald Szeemann’s 1969 exhibition “Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form”; we see the influence of Joseph Beuys, Robert Morris, or Klaus Rinke, as much as any gamelan ensemble. Atoui feels kinship with figures such as Christian Marclay. Iannis Xenakis is “a master,” according to Atoui, who knows deeply the prepared piano pieces of John Cage, the intermedia experiments of Dick Higgins, and the performances of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman.

And yet Atoui is an electroacoustic musician, and he refuses to fetishize his instruments as sculptures. He works not for visual effect, he says, but to “take the sound out; not forced, but in giving and dialogue,” in a radical act of reciprocity that recalls shamanic ritual as well as religious sacraments and popular processions. No matter how dramatically construed the performance may appear onstage, the art is in the composition, even if he implicitly questions authorship by allowing algorithms to generate scores. “There is no flow plan,” he says, while admitting the necessity of his own presence to choreograph the randomness.



David Schutter, *ANB C 1.03a*, 2024, oil on canvas, 23½ × 19¾".



View of “Tarek Atoui: Improvisation in 10 Days,” 2025. Photo: Rasa Juskeviciute.

Perhaps it is jazz that influences Atoui most, as the exhibition title, “Improvisation in 10 Days,” might imply. The show is named for the time it took to set up, its physical components selected and compiled from three prior iterations of the project, at Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst in Ghent, Belgium; and the Institut d’art contemporain Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes in France. The vast hall of HangarBicocca is dotted by wondrous musical contraptions, scattered almost haphazardly, it seems, whether carved of Pentelic marble or assembled from feathers or pipes dripping water. A variety of drumsticks on a long low plinth seemed poised for activation, some so fragile—made of porcelain or glass—they seem destined for single use. A Korean artisan, Seo In Seok, was on hand to activate the drums he had made—their reverberations involving the body-penetrating frequencies Atoui favors in his moving scores for the hearing impaired. Their sensitivity, Atoui says, outpaces those with normal hearing abilities.

Each instrument maker constructing the novel shapes Atoui uses in his compositions retains the copyright to their own production. Atoui is overjoyed if subeconomies are created for his many colleagues, choosing to favor the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as his intellectual property. When not in concert mode, the melee of instruments still reverberates via an ongoing soundscape programmed on an algorithmic basis to constantly self-generate new harmonies. The throbbs, thumps, and whistles riff through the history of modern European music, from Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland to Pierre Boulez, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich. But Atoui is equally at home in African and Asian traditions, as many of the sounds and instruments imply.

Here, in Milan, the difference between cultures and time periods is abolished; Atoui’s is global music played out on a world stage by a

Paris-based Lebanese musician artist unwilling to be identified with any one continent. He is cognizant of his origins yet fiercely tuned to the power of the individual thinker to make sense in a cacophonous world.

Lebanese friends of mine come to mind—Alex, Leila, Majd, Natalie. Their quiet air of resignation, while olive trees burn and their homeland grapples with refugees and war, is mirrored in the somber attitude and cerebral sound that is Atoui’s. His tones often seem mournful, yet they are also defiant: a throbbing heartbeat, with joy in its bass tones—darkness, with optimism, in its loop-based undercurrent.

—Cornelia Lauf

Silvia Bächli

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

Silvia Bächli called her recent exhibition “lines are telling stories,” and in fact her lines never stop narrating while continually changing their discursive purpose. Commentators often point to Bächli’s focus on drawing (pastel, charcoal, graphite)—though she also makes sculpture, albeit on a small scale—because of her preferred support, paper. In fact, Bächli is above all a painter. Her preference is for water-based media, especially gouache. The dimensions of her works range from the size of a sheet of drawing paper to a much larger scale achieved by extending her mark across numerous sheets. For Bächli, the nature of gesture—the involvement of the artist’s body in the creative act—has great importance. She often spreads the paper out on the floor and paints continuously, ignoring the gap between one page and the next; more

recently, she's been arranging the works on large tables. In either case, her posture—the position of her body—becomes important in the final rendering of the painting. One could say that the paper supports the gesture up to the limits imposed by the various components of the gesture: the size of the sheets, the kind and amount of paint, the scope and energy of the mark.

Along with recent works—all titled *Farbfeld* (Color Field), followed by an inventory number—the exhibition also contained a selection of earlier pieces. Two small works, both *Untitled*, 2011 and 2021, actually describe the metamorphoses of a line (an intersection of pink segments in the earlier work, a bundle of snappy black marks in the later one). *Spine 2*, 2023, painted on four sheets, depicts the vertical ascent of a dark-red braid that throws branches out at its sides in a treelike structure, and here the lateral lines lengthen just until the brush loses its color and not a moment before. In the *Farbfeld* works, the line explicitly becomes the brushstroke; it neither delineates nor constructs, but becomes the bearer of chromatic value, indeed creates a field of color, sometimes in decisive fashion. In *Farbfeld 065*, 2022, for instance, there are four horizontal bands, blue and green, in dark tones that in their compactness act as a barrier to the viewer's gaze. In *Farbfeld 081*, 2022, two fields of color, red and brown, barely allow the viewer to read the direction of the brush. In contrast, the tonal harmony of *Farbfeld 112*, 2022, in a green background superimposed on blue, is defined in very tenuous colors, and here the watery, almost transparent brushstrokes become clearly visible, attesting to the delicate but determined manual skill that emerges. Similarly, *Farbfeld 106*, 2023, which plays with the most minimal tonal difference between two vertical coats of pale pink,

as in a diptych, allows the underlying coat of yellow to show through. The coats of color can also be quite bright.

This show was connected to Bächli's concurrent exhibition at the Museo Morandi in Bologna, where the Swiss artist displayed her own works alongside those of the Italian master. For this occasion she made five paintings where the colors are those of the pigments still present in Morandi's studio and exhibited in his house museum. The tone of the pure pigment is more vivid than the diluted hue in Morandi's preparatory works, and here Bächli's paintings placed drafts à la Morandi near others that are more vibrant. Thus, the sense of gesture becomes bolder, and the brushstrokes are applied with determination and speed, enough to leave empty spaces at the edges of the sheets of paper, as if to play with the expressiveness and allure of the unfinished.

—Giorgio Verzotti

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

ATHENS

Barbara Wesołowska

MICHAEL WERNER GALLERY

Walking through Barbara Wesołowska's exhibition "Faithfully Represented," I wondered if the title was meant in an ironic or earnest way. The seven paintings on view all show glimpses of figures, their appearance blurry and ephemeral—they don't fully materialize in the flesh. "Faithfulness" here apparently does not refer to the depiction of the body or its individual characteristics. Yet in another way the paintings seem quite precise and true to an idea.

A saintlike figure in the upper half of the painting titled, like the show, *Faithfully Represented* (all works 2024) seems to be in the company of more vaguely defined creatures below. The painting's true focus, though, is on the environment surrounding these figurative motifs. And something similar is true for all the works. Their surfaces are sophisticated, their earthy palette somewhat muted, like camouflage, yet full of nuance. Often, one notices a contrast between glossy and matte passages—for instance, in the small *Fragment*. Wesołowska sometimes employs guided chance, creating parallel lines through dripped paint. In *Turned* this dripping happens in different directions, implying that the canvas was rotated during the painting process. In *Black Lustre*, small gridlike areas appear, not strictly geometric but showing the imperfections of the handwork. Gold leaf is affixed to the surface and then painted over. Other areas have a rusty look. The works are layered in materiality and look aged and full of hidden information. The paint does not just serve the aura and appearance of the intangible figuration, but creates independently an abstract map of sensibilities.

Wesołowska grew up in a strict religious environment in Wrocław, Poland. The Madonnas and saints she saw in the city's churches are seared, she has said, into her psyche and body—not necessarily as artistic images, but as an inescapable environment. At the age of twenty-six she moved to London, where she still lives, to study art and to gain distance from the church. At first she pursued this detachment by embracing all that is considered contemporary in art, but that interest faded, and these days she's more interested in Hans Memling. In the work she makes now, you could argue, she evokes imagery from childhood: the saints as they live on in her and resurface and transform. This archaeological investigation of mind and memory also reflects her interest in Freudian psychology; the exhibition title is actually taken from *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Wesołowska's works create a space of attention, or possibly devotion, even though keeping distance from religious affiliation. The figurative



Silvia Bächli,
Farbfeld 106 (Color
Field 106), 2023,
gouache on paper,
40 1/4 × 28 3/4".



Barbara Wesołowska,
Faithfully Represented,
2024, oil, shellac,
and gold leaf on
linen, 68¾ × 57".

glimpses we get to see come in expressive, powerful gestures, but they are incomplete, eroded. The work thus seems as much an act of consecration as of desecration, creating a paradox that makes it hard to grasp but good to enjoy, as it adds to the complexity and persuasiveness.

What seem faithfully represented here are the feelings and friction that arise—or even the revenants you meet—when you set out to paint pictures of spiritual beings, and the ambiguity included in such an effort. It is like painting a contemporary icon while acknowledging the failure to accomplish such a work, and making that part of what the work actually represents. While Wesołowska’s faces or figures remain unfinished and exist in a mental rather than a physical space, the surfaces of her paintings unfold with virtuosity and in full physicality. It is the body of paint that is celebrated here.

—Jurriaan Benschop

WINTERTHUR, SWITZERLAND

Valentina Triet

KUNSTHALLE WINTERTHUR

Breaking an image down into pixels is done to blur identities, censor intimacies, or represent a glitch exposing the raw material of an image’s underlying code. For her show “Of manners, of trips,” Valentina Triet presented four videos projected onto the walls of Kunsthalle Winterthur’s two rooms: nearly four hours of footage collaged from twenty-three archival videos of fashion shows from the 1980s until now, abstracted by being reduced to an extremely low resolution, leaving only pixels visible. The only indication that runway shows are the source material is in the energy of the flickering colored rectangles lighting up and then fading, blinking and glimmering toward the angle of a panning camera lens in sync with the original runway soundtracks.

Triet has mentioned in an interview that she treats these videos “a bit like (time) documents (in German: *Zeitdokumente*)” and therefore leaves them unabridged. Yet she does not identify or refer to the fashion designers whose videos have been incorporated, nor the models who participated. The point is evidently not fidelity to the source (and the zeitgeist that fashion aims to encapsulate), but rather to grasp the shifting subliminal energies and urgencies through which certain bodies have funded themselves by the way a market would pay for their walk. The omission of names and dates allows the artist to trace patterns outside cultural narratives that rely on periodization, perhaps to shift our attention toward the affective labor and emotional production inextricable from both culture and its commodification.

Disidentified, the pixelated and projected fashion bodies march on like apparitions but are not detached from their allure. Rather, their emotive quality is extracted and transferred as our soft gaze focuses on the pixels moving synchronously to the pulse of a stride and our ears tune in to the beat that tempers its gait. Emphasis is placed on gesture, movement, innuendo, and pose, making tangible the displaced agency circulated through and among bodies.

In the spaces of vernacular culture, such as the nightclub or dance hall, vibes are generated by and for those who exist in social worlds where walking and standing are forms of self-disciplinary posturing. Low culture is made bourgeois in the consumption of subcultural gestures for the fashion runway, then made high when the artist’s abstraction is filtered through art discourse and criticism, before becoming mass when inevitably recirculated as eye candy for the Instagram runway. Yet unlike these runways with their consuming spectators, “Of manners, of trips” was an ambient exhibition where the audience didn’t necessarily have to look. Instead we were left to our other senses. Affective aesthetics are translated into colored rectangles with a spectrum of hues twinkling to rhythms ranging from Baroque to blues, oscillating between twangy and industrial, remixed. It was enough to simply *be* in the exhibition’s open space, under the charming and ephemeral spell of its rhythmic visuals and vibrant sounds, rehearsing a strut of one’s own on the Kunsthalle’s empty floor.

—Cecilia Bien

VIENNA

Medardo Rosso

MUSEUM MODERNER KUNST STIFTUNG LUDWIG WIEN

“Inventing Modern Sculpture,” an ambitious survey of the work of Medardo Rosso (1858–1928), was a far-reaching display of one of modern sculpture’s titans, but it didn’t begin with his sculpture. Curator Heike Eipeldauer chose to open with the artist’s photographs, material usually relegated to footnotes. Rosso took pictures of his sculptures repeatedly, from different angles, in many light conditions and with various cropping—endlessly reexamining how his sculptures could be presented and perceived. Even before reading any of the wall texts, one could immediately sense this was an exhibition with a clear statement: Rosso pioneered what it means to be a modern artist. What does that entail? The answer: experimentation, abstraction, ease in mixing media, privileging materiality, understanding the power of photography, a feeling for display and installation, and self-presentation through performance and reproductive media. In all these, Rosso demonstrated extraordinary foresight and willingness to test the limits.

The exhibition was roughly divided into four parts. First, the photographs. Next, Rosso’s sculptures were shown with the original display system he designed, which consisted of stool-like pedestals and, for some, glass boxes he called *gabbie*, or cages. Then, Rosso’s sculptures



Medardo Rosso, *Ecce Puer (Behold the Child)*, undated, photograph, 6 7/8 × 3 1/2". From "Medardo Rosso: Inventing Modern Sculpture."

crying child, as well as her right arm, are emerging, as though they are encrusted. Its tenderness and fragile beauty come perilously close to grotesque, which gives what could have been a rather corny motif an air of excitement and tension. And as Michelangelo understood the task of sculptor to be the revelation of a form already present in a block of marble, Rosso thought his mission was to let the human shape emerge from lumps of his modeling clay. In the plaster version of *Madame Noblet*, 1897, cast after 1914, the nose, eyes, and mouth are just barely identifiable in a heap of matter: a pile of clay blocks, whose underlying shape you can clearly see at the sculpture's back.

While Rosso's sculptures dance on the edge of abstraction, his much less known drawings jump in headfirst. They don't appear to be preparatory works. For instance, a couple of undated landscapes consist mostly of horizontal marks of varying intensity in graphite or charcoal that define pictorial space without depicting any recognizable motif. He also photographed many of his drawings, thereby turning them into multiples like his sculptures. Presenting the photograph of an artwork as an artwork, the method favored by Pictures Generation artists such as Louise Lawler and Sherrie Levine, Rosso removed the immediacy of mark-making and created more distance, pushing the abstract character of his drawings even further.

In exhibitions of historical artists, having a section on artists they influenced often seems superfluous and distracting. Here, it made perfect sense, in part because Rosso himself liked incorporating other artists' works into his exhibitions, but also because the connections between Rosso and later artists were genuinely enlightening. Learning about Phyllida Barlow's enthusiasm for what she called Rosso's "alarmingly alive" edges made me rethink her works. Now I imagine her limping monumentality to be an attempt to invade the edges of the world, the edges that had already been made more porous by Rosso.

—Yuki Higashino

were shown alongside works by his contemporaries and successors, ranging from several pieces by Degas to a recent sculpture by Nairy Baghramian. Finally, Rosso's drawings. Each section was given equal weight, further emphasizing the multifaceted nature of his practice. Eipeldauer's curation, the exhibition design by Florian Pumhösl and Walter Kräutler, and the elegant catalogue designed by Martha Stuteregger all came together with a rare degree of aesthetic unity and convincingly demonstrated the show's implicit thesis.

Rosso's approach to the tactility of material still feels radical. His signature technique of coating plaster casts with wax generated an oddly skin-like texture, and the translucency of wax made the plaster underneath vaguely skeletal. The subjects, all human figures, often just heads, appear to be melting, their contours dissolving. Take *Aetas auream* (Golden Age), 1886, for instance. It's a wax-covered mass, from which the heads of a woman and her

BERLIN

Jack O'Brien

CAPTAIN PETZEL

The centerpiece of British sculptor Jack O'Brien's solo exhibition "Cascade" was *Semblance*, 2025, a dramatic suspended assemblage consisting of two antique grand pianos attached at their keyboards, but with a central oculus cut out and with roofing asphalt wrapped around them. With the instruments' black-lacquered lids and legs removed, their golden internal apparatus was revealed—not an act of Fluxus-inspired vandalism but a kind of disrobing or unveiling.

O'Brien's odd amalgams are purposeful repurposings of existing things. For instance, his exhibition "The Reward" at London's Camden Art Centre in 2024 included two thirty-three-foot-long dismounted spiral staircases hanging horizontally next to each other, wrapped in stockinette fabric and augmented by weird shiny orbs. Other, more body-scaled works have incorporated clothing, wine bottles and glasses, plumbing fixtures, and plastic tubing. Improvised and patched together, those works suggest a preoccupation with precarity and making do in a way that allows imaginative outpourings to triumph, if just for a moment, over circumstance.

Sculpture must always negotiate gravity and the possibility of a fall. Harnessing the patina of the found and the unease of the displaced, *Semblance* also evokes more specific cultural associations with middle-class European culture. In the philosophical and political aftermath of World War II, it was the perceived failure of bourgeois values and politics that justified such acts of symbolic piano-cide as Al Hansen's 1946 "action" of pushing an upright off a bombed-out building in postwar Frankfurt (this was the origin of his renowned and often-repeated piece *Yoko Ono Piano Drop*, 1959) or Raphael Montañez Ortiz's axe job at the Destruction in Art Symposium in London in September 1966. O'Brien's contemporary upcycling and reuse of defunct musical instruments, by contrast, is constructive, even reparative. In his works, familiar

Jack O'Brien, *Semblance*, 2025, grand pianos, roofing asphalt, steel wire, 5' 11 1/8" × 12' 2 1/8" × 1' 6 7/8".



objects transform into less knowable entities, recalling a lineage of modernist collage and assemblage that includes both Robert Rauschenberg's "Combines" and Anthony Caro's welded metal constructions. In O'Brien's hands nonnarrative, formal sculptural methods feel refreshingly uncynical and full of queer possibilities.

The nine curious sculptures in this show fully and unapologetically embraced sculptural syntax without a single ounce of unconsidered materiality. Among them were a variety of off-kilter combinations entailing shiny silver-plated horns, as seen in *Wishbone*, 2024. Protruding like the candelabra in Jean Cocteau's Surrealist film *Le sang d'un poète* (The Blood of a Poet), 1932, the sculpture consists of a sprouting horn, a spring, and ten silver spoons—a whimsical manifestation of DIY Art Deco-influenced chic. Something similar is true of *Velleity*, 2025, another quirky horn combined with polished forks, a cake slicer, and PVC piping.

The exhibition's title, "Cascade," suggests one thing leading to another, a joyous tumult, maybe even a campy and performative flourish on the ivories. There is a strange pleasure at work. Sensuality and eroticism, expressed in an original fashion and in many guises, pervade O'Brien's sculptures. Take, for example, *Interlude*, 2025, a rendezvous attended by two former East German streetlights connected by their necks and shrouded by netting. Love is abstract. Here, O'Brien's conceptual innovation beyond technical novelty becomes clear. Evoking skin, skeletons, and passages for fluid or air, his work also suggests liaisons, bodies, or body parts on display or closely examined, although never literally. O'Brien is aware of what is legible to whom, and he doesn't mind the work seeming odd, even obtuse. The artist has invested his work with an intrinsic queerness that is nondeterminative, nonexclusionary, permissive, and promiscuous with respect to the production of meaning.

—Dominic Eichler

WROCLAW, POLAND

Marian Henel

NATIONAL MUSEUM IN WROCLAW—
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Marian Henel (1926–1993) was born an illegitimate child in the Polish countryside and then orphaned. He is said to have experienced sexual violence of some kind in his youth. Later he developed a habit of dressing up as a woman in the confines of his little room at a collective farm where he worked as a handyman. At a certain point he set fire to a barn, for which he was first sent to prison and, soon after, to the psychiatric hospital in Branice, in southern Poland, where he spent the rest of his life. Deeply troubled, he found a haven of sorts there. The staff encouraged art therapy, and he learned weaving. And he further indulged in his propensity for drag, photographing himself emulating his sexual ideal: an obese nurse, usually posing bottom to the camera.

The recent exhibition "*Oblęd: Przypadek Mariana Henela – lubieżnika z Branicy*" (Madness: The Case of Marian Henel – Lecher from Branice) was the first time the carpets could be seen together in public, but his photography has been gathering some traction in outsider art exhibitions in recent years. Unfortunately, this show did not treat him as a proper artist, choosing to present him as a curious weirdo, a pervert, and a sex maniac.

However, the show succeeded despite itself, thanks to the originality of Henel's work, which was squeezed into just two rooms. Still, we looked with our mouths agape at how this man could combine a very intricate and painstaking loom technique (each one could take up to two years to make) and such wild, vulgar, absolutely unhinged imagery.

Eroticism meets violence: Naked female bodies, always with prominent bottoms, morph into monstrosities, as in *Kobieta wamp* (Female Vamp), 1972, with its chubby naked she-devil sporting horns, pig ears, and a tail. Her naked body is entwined by a snake, like the tree in the Garden of Eden. She's surrounded by overgrown insects and devil bats with their tongues sticking out, and a gigantic toad with breasts emerges from a nearby lake. The protagonist of *Pielegniarka* (Nurse), 1974, goes wading in the water, pulling up her skirt to reveal her pubes, while a man nearby exposes his genitals; a bat's wings bear the hospital's name. *Szpital w Branicach* (Branice Hospital), 1976, shows an animal/human orgy in which the women all have bestial faces, eyes floating out of their sockets, and devil's tails. Its central figure resembles a sort of breast-shaped infant, lactating, with milk slurped by a bald disembodied head, with a hand growing off it and scratching itself.



Marian Henel,
Szpital w Branicach
(Branice Hospital),
1976, wool carpet,
13' 1½" × 8' 2¾".

I know of nothing quite like this in art history, but it did make me think of Hieronymus Bosch, Robert Crumb's deeply problematic depictions of women, and the quasi-Surrealist "pornograms" of Clovis Trouille. The sexual polymorphism in Henel's photographs recalls the work of Marcel Basculard or Pierre Molinier. Like them, he could be called a "lost Surrealist," with Surrealism understood as a universal mode of approaching desire. Henel is an exhibitionist, proud of his exploits, and looking at his work turns us into voyeurs.

His obsessive blasphemy and taboo-breaking might have had to do with the disciplinary regimes he experienced in collective farms,

prison, and the hospital. They are marked by the injustice he experienced, even if his work reeks of misogyny and other unpleasantness. But it remains a mystery why Henel's efforts were supported. Perhaps the staff considered them a useful outlet for the dangerous powers resting in their patient. But like every artist, Henel has the right to be judged not on the basis of his biography alone but on his work, and these staggering, troubling pieces invite plenty of reflection—not that you could have guessed this from the curatorial framing here. Why, after some art-world acclaim, he had to be reduced again to a perverted simpleton is a sign of the curators' capitulation before his work and a testament, perhaps, to attitudes in Poland toward both mental illness and sexual ambiguity.

—Agata Pyzik

NEW DELHI

Shilpa Gupta

BIKANER HOUSE

It took a while for my eyes to adjust to the gloom surrounding Shilpa Gupta's sound installation *Listening Air*, 2019–22, which was presented by Vadehra Art Gallery at the Centre for Contemporary Art at Bikaner House. Above my head, microphones and dim bulbs moved in a slow dance to the haunting strains of songs in different tongues. I could discern, for instance, the familiar "*Hum Dekhenge*" (We Shall See), penned by Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, which crossed borders

to become a rallying cry and a symbol of hope among Indian student protesters in 2019. Also in the mix was "*Bella Ciao*," a song in tribute to the anti-fascist partisans of the 1940s, which became an anthem of resistance during farmers' sit-down protests in Delhi in 2020. The installation was reminiscent of Gupta's earlier work *For, in Your Tongue, I Can Not Fit - 100 Jailed Poets*, 2017–18, which featured the works of poets who were imprisoned either for their poetry or politics.

The theme of censorship and the relationship between the state and its citizens was also evident in an adjacent room, where bottles of varying shapes and sizes sat on wooden shelves in four cabinets, interspersed with hanging light bulbs. They bore labels with censored lines of poetry, such as DANCE YOUR ANGER and LAUGHTER BECOMES A CRIME. This work, *Untitled (Spoken Poem in a Bottle)*,

2021/2023, originated in a poignant gesture: Gupta whispered the very same snatches of poems into the bottles before capping them. *A Liquid, the Mouth Froze*, 2018, the cast of an open mouth in gunmetal, has a text alongside it reading, I WAS WALKING ON THE STREET. A CAR STOPPED, A FEW MEN STEPPED OUT, AND PUSHED INTO MY MOUTH, A LIQUID. THE MOUTH FROZE. Nearby, a fragile tower of pencil points, evocative of Brancusi's *Infinite Column*, 1937–38, paid tribute to the tenacity of poets despite the odds in *Untitled (Tower of Broken Pencil*

Points), 2021. The muzzling of free speech by authoritarian regimes was also evoked in a series of drawings based on the lives of incarcerated poets, *Untitled*, 2018–. They show the outlines of people's bodies, some of whose details are erased, making the persons vanish in plain sight.

Many of the national borders in South Asia were created arbitrarily. To make *Unnoticed*, 2017, the artist mounted motor parts atop large-scale color photographs of clouds floating in the sky, shot on the India-Bangladesh border. While clouds respect no boundaries, whole motors need to be disassembled into smaller components before they can cross the border, only to be ingeniously reassembled on the other side. *1:7690*, 2023, consists of a tightly wound ball of shredded strips of clothing carried from Bangladesh to India. The length of these fabric strips when multiplied by the ratio in the title corresponds to the length of the fenced border between the two neighbors.

In one of the most lyrical works in the show, *Untitled*, 2023, Gupta arranged a series of hourglasses one above the other, mimicking a spinal column. By placing them on their sides she rendered them useless for timekeeping, a powerful reminder that tiny acts of resistance can circumvent mechanisms of measurement and control.

—Meera Menezes

MUMBAI

Dayanita Singh

JEHANGIR NICHOLSON ART FOUNDATION

Dayanita Singh does not regard herself as strictly a photographer but has called herself, at times, a "photo-architect," "photo-magician," "bookmaker," and so on. "Photo Lies," a show that scrambles the idea of an artwork's permanence—one of five concurrent exhibitions across India—was yet another demonstration of Singh's photographic polymorphism. Skeletal remains of Singh's well-known *Museum of Chance*, 2013, segmented the gallery: These are tall, commanding teak structures, each a hybrid of a display cabinet and a hinged screen, which were formerly filled with monochrome prints. Here they were exposed as infrastructure—emptied of their photographic contents, leaving visible the slats meant to hold the images and internal bolt holes. The voids seemed to anticipate new arrivals, as if during a spring cleaning.

Such revisionism is not unusual for Singh. Her works have many lives, and over the years she has continually revisited, taken apart, and doctored her hefty archive of photos. Products of such tinkering were visible on the wall here. Some photographs are now veiled by translucent paint; others have simply been assembled out of disparate parts. For instance, *Mona Montages (Mona in the archive)*, 2021, consists of black-and-white photographs showing a beloved late friend inserted into images shot in uninhabited storage facilities, originally for her series "File Room," 2013. *Montage V (Mona arrives)*, 2024, shows her in the doorway of a richly marbled interior that is all straight lines and gleaming surfaces, while other architectural images displayed close by are vacant. These clear vistas, purged of color, allow the material qualities of each environment to be accentuated. Dazzling the viewer with granular detail, Singh builds structural fictions. These are sites created through seamless montaging. Singh splices together elements from her photographic archive and fuses different components back together. It takes a sharpened eye to detect the cuts and incongruities. A shoji partition meets industrial concrete in *Montage X*, 2019, and interiors meld with exteriors within other exteriors in *Montage XXI*, 2019. Yet the images feel familiar and the spaces habitable. These images seem to extend an invitation to enter them: to walk through corridors, down



Shilpa Gupta, *Untitled (Spoken Poem in a Bottle)* (detail), 2021/2023, bottles, shelves, light bulbs, overall 32½ × 12 × 68½".



Dayanita Singh, *Ellora Eyes*, 2024, teak panel, 12 ink-jet prints, 75 1/4 x 54".

stairs, across atria. To a degree, that's contingent on the camera's low vantage point. Singh holds her camera close to her stomach, not looking through the aperture but trusting her gut. See a picture of Singh shooting and you'd say that she and her equipment are colluding.

Photographs of pristine, empty properties framed in three freestanding teak columns look improbable in this context of manipulation. Each "pillar" stands as a totem to one of the male architects who have left their mark on South Asia, cataloguing some of their design motifs. *Corbu Pillar*, 2021, collects the concrete columns that hold up Le Corbusier's creations; *BV Stairs*, 2021, features B. V. Doshi's staircases; and *Bawa Rocks*, 2020, shows the rocky masses incorporated into Geoffrey Bawa's Kandalama Hotel in Sri Lanka.

It is sensible not to trust images these days. The works Singh calls contact-sheet formulations recall, perhaps unwittingly, the three-across grid format of Instagram profile pages—an app that is often bemoaned as one of the chief proliferators of visual untruths. Singh's rows of photos offer associations between buildings that span great distances and time. Taking a Warburgian approach to architectural history, *Architects' Gathering*, 2024, connects second-century Pompeian interiors with the work of modern architects Rahul Mehrotra, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Kazuo Shinohara, and Eduardo Souto de Moura. *Ellora Eyes*, 2024, associates details from Maharashtra's seventh-century Ellora caves with features from Bijoy Jain's Mumbai studio. In each work, the distinction between the historically and geographically distant locations becomes excruciatingly subtle. Singh has been clear that she does not care about "the where and when." This unmoored approach perhaps makes her audience care all the more.

—Cleo Roberts-Komiredi

HO CHI MINH CITY

Tuan Andrew Nguyen

GALERIE QUYNH

Although Tuan Andrew Nguyen is known for his video-based practice that weaves intricate storytelling with surreal visuals of daily ordinariness, his recent solo exhibition "Fight or Flight or Float or Fall" unveiled his experiments in sculpture. At the core of the show was Nguyen's desire to experience images through shifting perspectives: a hanging mobile made from artillery shells unearthed from central Vietnam, layered pictures of three astronauts painted on fluttering bamboo curtains that evoke the Cold War-era space race, a brass dragonfly perched delicately on a base made from unidentified ordnance. These kinetic sculptures not only harbor complex layers of histories that still haunt present-day Vietnam, but also provide a fresh perspective on how found material can be reincarnated into "moving images."

The bamboo curtain is a common household item in Vietnam and coincidentally a Cold War metaphor for the ideological demarcation between capitalist and Communist states in Asia. Nguyen transformed the curtain into sculptural material that disintegrates images and disrupts historical layers. Suspended from the ceiling, the cuboid *Pierced* (all works 2024) consisted of thirty-seven layers of enamel-painted curtains that viewers could walk through. Entering from one end, we see a tranquil-blue facade; from the other, a nuclear-orange orb floating on the horizon: an explosion. As one spread the curtains and pierced the cube, the bamboo cylinders began to flutter and vibrate, temporarily unsettling the image of the atomic blast.

This rupture of historical narratives through destabilized images continued in another ensemble of works, in each of which a pseudo-painting was created from three layers of curtain. *Bang* superimposes the famous bullet-through-apple photograph by Harold Edgerton—whose firm also



Tuan Andrew Nguyen, *Frontier*, 2024, bamboo, enamel paint, metal wire, steel, wood, 79 1/8 x 60 1/4 x 8 1/2".

documented nuclear explosions for the US Atomic Energy Commission—on an image of the Earth and one of a mushroom cloud. *Frontier* collapses the portraits of three astronauts, one each from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. As the bamboo curtains moved, the images emblematic of the Cold War shifted and lost their legibility, suggesting potential interstices for dissonant microhistories and perhaps even geopolitical paradigm shifts—testifying to the malleability of history. While dominant discourses on Cold War events such as the space race have largely adhered to a USA-versus-USSR duality, Nguyen’s insertion of the Vietnamese astronaut Phạm Tuân subtly unsettled this binary, expressing the unspoken aspirations of sidelined nations while still gesturing toward their complicated involvements with key powers.

Invested in the disruptive potential of mundane objects, Nguyen is also enraptured with the idea of material reincarnation, particularly in the case of unexploded ordnance (UXO), which can remain dangerous for decades. Having collaborated with UXO-removal NGOs who work in Vietnam’s Quảng Trị province, one of the most heavily bombed places in the world, Nguyen gathered artillery shells to recast into sculpture, releasing these destructive munitions from their violent past. For instance, he pounded and carved brass shells into dragonflies, finely balanced above a brass shell base. Conjuring the innocent form of a popular tourist souvenir, Nguyen contradicts the physical and historical weight of his material, allowing viewers to engage with the works as if they were toys. Extending this trajectory of functional transformation, *57MM #4 - Untitled* imbues a bombshell with healing aesthetics, turning it into a wind chime sanded down to yield a sound whose frequency is 685.76 HZ—a soothing vibration that has been incorporated into the treatment of war veterans suffering from PTSD. Shaped like a Calderesque hanging mobile, with brass disks also made from UXO, the bell sang Nguyen’s hope for psychological reparation for war, as its therapeutic sonics reverberated across the exhibition space.

—Hung Duong

SYDNEY

Derek Jarman

UNSW GALLERIES

Dealing in freighted subject matter, “Derek Jarman: Delphinium Days,” presents material largely taken from the latter part of the artist’s career, the years leading up to his death from AIDS-related illness in 1994 at the age of fifty-two. A focused selection of films, paintings, and documentation highlights his engagement with queer culture and identity in the lead-up to, and during, the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and ’90s.

The stage is set as you enter the first of several darkened rooms. Two projected Super 8 films—the earliest works in the exhibition, dating from the mid-’70s—flank a series of spotlit canvases from Jarman’s “Black Paintings” series, 1986–93, made following his HIV diagnosis and the death of his father, both in 1986. Jarman screened his Super 8 films sometimes with, sometimes without sound, and the soundtracks could vary depending on the occasion. Here, an ominous score by Simon Fisher Turner permeates most of the rooms, lending the exhibition a sense of impending doom that keeps Jarman’s mortality at the front of the viewer’s mind. This music comes from a 2021 iteration of *My Very Beautiful Movie* (1974), which features footage of the iconic gay enclave of Fire Island, which Jarman refilmed through the distorting effects of a prism.

Film, the medium Jarman is best known for, not only opens the show but, in a screening room dedicated to Jarman’s famous final film, the powerful monochromatic meditation on mortality *Blue* (1993), concludes it. In between, we encounter Jarman’s late painting practice, and in a smaller room off the first gallery are photographs of Jarman’s cottage

and garden in Dungeness, England, as well as of his canonization by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of queer activists sporting nuns’ habits. The paintings consist of allover surfaces—either monochromatic, as in the case of the “Black Paintings,” or with send-ups of Abstract Expressionist gestures, as with his last paintings from 1993—interrupted by objects or text. Toward the end of Jarman’s life his paintings were mostly executed by assistants who helped the artist as his eyesight began to fail. In them, Jarman inflects the codes of abstract painting with humor, for instance in his Pollockesque splatters, from whose optical mist emerges the simultaneously funny and harrowing titular statement *Arse Injected Death Syndrome*, 1993.

In the “Black Paintings” of the late ’80s, found objects infiltrate and complicate the dark monochrome surfaces of canvases such as *God Bless American Express*, 1987, in which greed, excess, and other themes coexist with the morbidity of AIDS-era Britain. *I.N.R.I.*, 1988, depicts a couple of Skeletor action figures (from the *Masters of the Universe* franchise) cruising one another, with He-Man as Jesus tied to the cross, all trapped within a dystopian surface of rusting debris. In his merger of assemblage with modernist painting tropes, Jarman takes on the coding used in covert ways by historical queer figures such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg but makes it overt, “outing” his works rather than operating on the double level his queer predecessors relied on out of necessity.

The overt queerness of Jarman’s work amounts to a defiance of the will in mainstream politics and culture in the late ’80s and early ’90s to silence queer voices—for instance, the prohibition against local authorities “promoting” homosexuality enacted by Margaret Thatcher’s government in 1988. Jarman’s embrace of a wide range of practices—from painting to performance to film to gardening to activism, all highlighted in this exhibition—allowed him to deliver challenging content in a variety of formats, which makes his work all the more relevant to younger artists who are seeking ways to contest today’s resurgences of right-wing policies that repress and control bodies and acts.

—Alex Bacon



Derek Jarman, *I.N.R.I.*, 1988, oil and mixed media on canvas, 13¼ × 10⅝".

COLLIER/BLACK PLANET from page 81
NOTES

1. Antawan I. Byrd, Elvira Dyangani Ose, Adom Getachew, and Matthew S. Witkovsky, “The Long Century,” in *Project a Black Planet: The Art and Culture of Panafrica*, ed. Byrd, Dyangani Ose, Getachew, and Witkovsky (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024), 18.

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8. Joanna Dee Das, *Katherine Dunham: Dance and the African Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

9. Robert Farris Thompson, *African Art in Motion* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 26.

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11. Sandrine Colard, “More Than Skin Deep: When Blackness Adapts,” in Byrd, et al., *Project a Black Planet*, 283.

12. Rasheed Araeen, “From primitivism to ethnic arts,” *Third Text*, 1, no. 1 (1987): 6–25.

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14. See “African Modernism,” ed. Salah M. Hassan, special issue, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, no. 3 (2010), for essays on this intersection.

15. Iftikhar Dadi, “Calligraphic Abstraction,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* vol. 2, ed. F. B. Flood and G. Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), doi.org/10.1002/9781119069218.ch50.

16. Tobias Wofford, “Diasporic Returns in the Jet Age: The First World Festival of Negro Arts and the Promise of Air Travel,” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 20, no. 7 (2018): 9.

17. Cleaver, quoted in Sophia Azeb, “Mapping the ‘Arab’ in Pan-African Political Cultures,” in Byrd. et. al, *Project a Black Planet*, 299.

Caption acknowledgments
Page 32: Lynda Benglis, *The Graces*, 2003–2005. © Lynda Benglis. Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. David Hammons, *Untitled*, 1992.

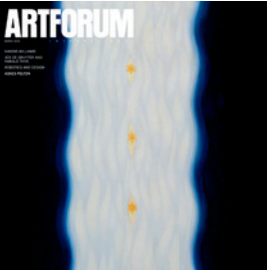
© David Hammons/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. **Page 141:** Letizia Battaglia, *È stato ucciso mentre andava in garage a prendere la macchina* (He was killed on his way to the garage to get his car), 1976. © Courtesy Archivio Letizia Battaglia.

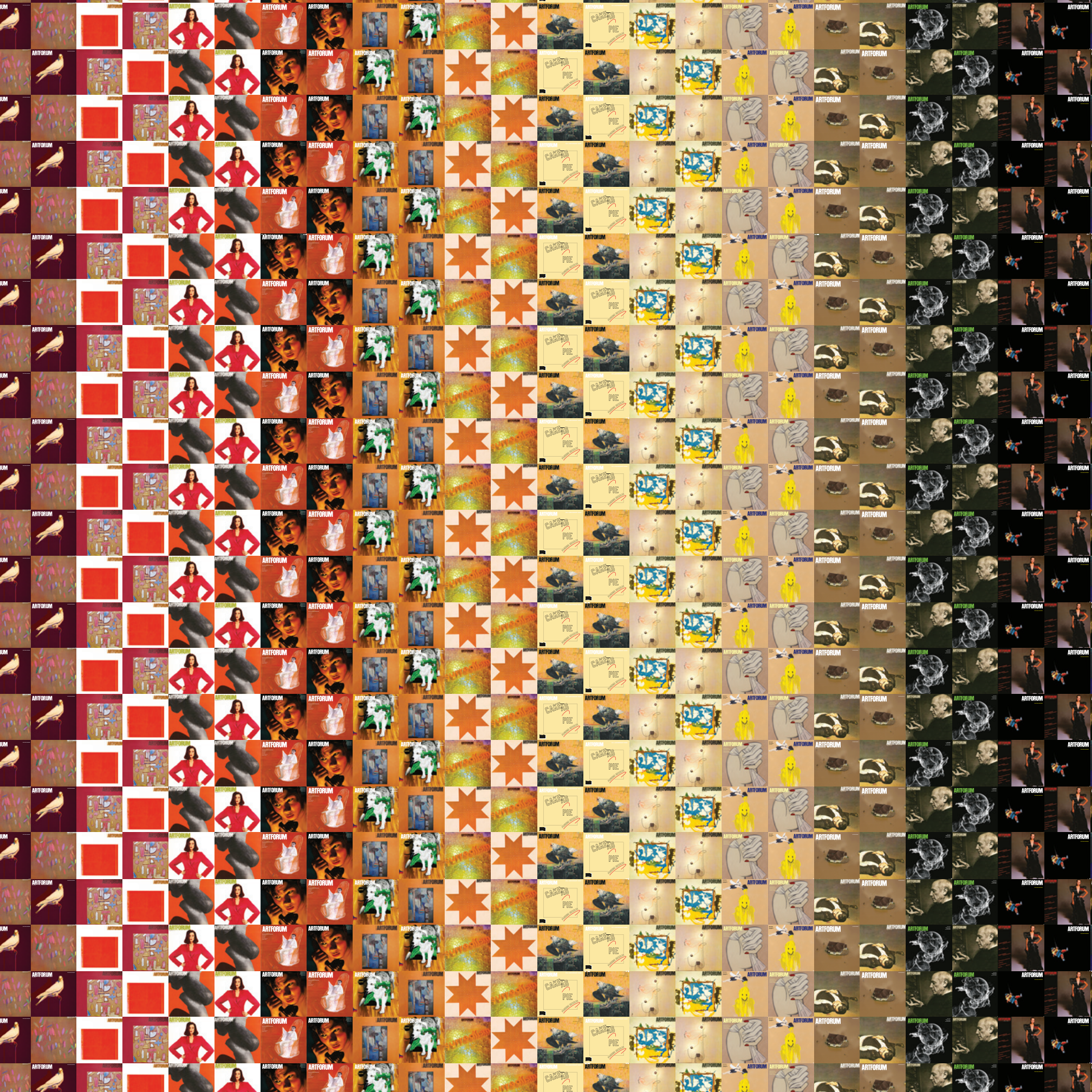
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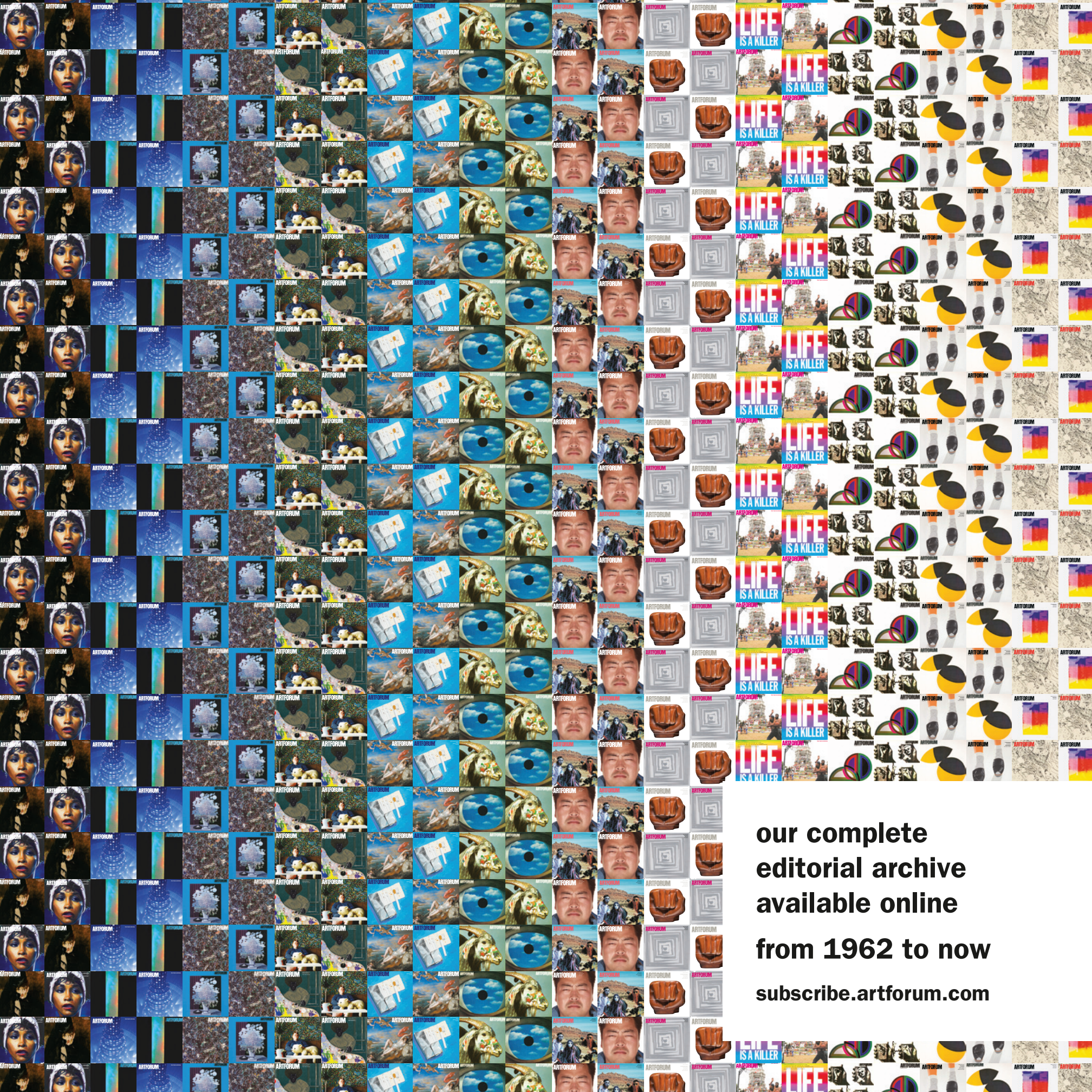


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FRANCESCA DU BROCK

AS THE CHIEF CURATOR at the Anchorage Museum in Alaska, Francesca Du Brock deploys a curatorial practice that emphasizes community engagement, collaboration, and a commitment to the ecology and history of Alaska and the surrounding region. Her recent projects include “How to Survive” (2023–25), exploring themes of resilience and reciprocity in the face of climate crises; “Black Lives in Alaska: Journey, Justice, Joy” (2021–22); and “Extra Tough: Women of the North” (2020–21). In February, she was announced as the recipient of the 2025 Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History, a \$100,000 award that honors leaders in the curatorial field. Her latest exhibition, “Dog Show,” featuring artworks, archival images, and other objects and ephemera that illustrate the pivotal role of dog-human relationships on the culture of the region, opens May 2.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE CURATING?

I think of curators fundamentally as connectors—bridge-builders, matchmakers, and facilitators. Our work is about asking questions and creating the conditions for various people—artists, audiences, and communities—to come together in ways that feel enlivening and meaningful, and that hopefully foster deeper and continuing exchange.

WHAT WAS THE LAST SHOW YOU TRAVELED TO SEE?

I just returned from the Hawai‘i Triennial, “Aloha Nō,” curated by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Binna Choi, and Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu. It was exciting to see thematic resonances across our Pacific region, including sovereignty, place-based knowledge, reciprocity, and care for lands, waters, and people.

WHAT UPCOMING EXHIBITION (BESIDES YOURS) ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

I’m hoping I’ll make it to England to see the exhibition “A World of Water” at the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, organized by my friend John Kenneth Paranada, the institution’s Curator of Art and Climate Change. I appreciate how Ken marries art with climate science, history, and local stories, as well as his contagious optimism about the role of culture in confronting the climate crisis.

WHAT IS ONE SHOW THAT HAD A BIG INFLUENCE ON YOU?

I’m constantly influenced and inspired by the work of others, though being based in Alaska means I probably see fewer shows than curators in other parts of the world. I’m interested in museums as spaces for cultivating perceptual knowledge guided by listening, feeling, moving, sensing, etc. To that end, I found Julien Creuzet’s installation at the 2024 Venice Biennale, curated by Céline Kopp and Cindy Sissokho, very affecting for the way it invited

a multisensory exploration of the space and encouraged that kind of deeply intuitive understanding. I was also very moved by “Salmon Culture” (2023–24) here at the Anchorage Museum, curated by Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi and a cohort of Alaska Native artists and activists. The exhibition beautifully manifested relationships between Alaska Native people and salmon through an emphasis on materiality, including parkas, mittens, boots, baskets, and artworks made from fish skin. It showed how you can’t separate people from the environment—we are interconnected and interdependent.

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF CRITICISM YOU’VE READ RECENTLY?

I loved Aruna D’Souza’s *Imperfect Solidarities* (Floating Opera Press, 2024), which argues that empathy is an insufficient framework for nurturing common concern and political allyship with those we may never deeply know or even understand. She challenges us to act instead



Photo: Jovell Rennie

from a more difficult “obligation to care,” whether or not we empathize. This feels increasingly urgent at a moment when basic human and environmental rights are being questioned and curtailed in the United States. I also enjoy reading Siddhartha Mitter in the *New York Times* for his detailed and human-centered reporting on artists—especially those using art as a medium for critical thinking and social change.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR IDEA THAT IS INSPIRING YOUR WORK NOW?

I’m interested in experimental ways of shifting museum practice—how we create exhibitions, how we think about and apply sustainability principles to our work, and how we measure success. Arts institutions have the potential to envision alternatives to dominant modes of production and consumption, yet we so often seem to fall into the same trap of pernicious perfectionism and ever-accelerating growth and content creation.

“How to Survive” was an attempt to tackle some of these issues. It considered how the museum itself could demonstrate care by actively evaluating our own processes and approaches. Many large installations were realized via long-distance collaboration with artists and fabricated in Anchorage using local and repurposed components. We also experimented with paper-based and non-PVC materials for exhibition text and graphics, extended the run time, and communicated more transparently with visitors and collaborators about our process—both the successes and the challenges. It was thrilling to work on a project with so many unknowns and to prioritize the process over the final product.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION HAPPENING NOW WITHIN THE CURATORIAL FIELD OR IN THE ARTS MORE BROADLY?

As I mentioned above, I think reevaluating our priorities and ideas around success feels so critical right now. This applies to how we engage with audiences, creatives, communities, and the environment. I’m inspired by the work Candice Hopkins is leading at Forge Project, on Stockbridge-Munsee land in upstate New York. Forge measures its success by the health of the land; I love that this metric is seemingly simple yet contains many possibilities for reimagining how we value cultural production.

WHAT DO YOU WISH PEOPLE BETTER UNDERSTOOD ABOUT CURATING?

This question makes me laugh because when young people ask to shadow me, I am forced to reveal that so much of my job is emailing, spreadsheets, and project management. I’m pretty sure they don’t want to sit beside me hunched over a laptop all day. It’s an office job. But the work is also about service—to artists, to colleagues, to others’ ideas. That part I love.

WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO AN ASPIRING CURATOR?

I would offer that, in my experience, there is no direct path, no specific degree that will guarantee success in this field. Don’t wait for someone to validate you with a fancy job offer—seek out opportunities to make shows with friends or gain experience through adjacent or overlapping fields. Stay curious and open-minded. And remember that the world is small: treat people with kindness and respect. As you get older, more and more of your peers will be in a position to help you out.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING A CURATOR CAN DO FOR AN ARTIST?

I believe curators should elevate the work of their local artistic communities and connect them to national/international practitioners and conversations. Expand access to opportunities for experimentation and research without the expectation of an exhibition or final project. Meet artists where they are: For folks off the road system in Alaska, I try to find virtual opportunities for collaboration that don’t require expensive travel to Anchorage. When artists and curators have a dynamic synergy, they ask each other good questions that expand thinking in both directions. □



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A flash-back to an earlier time still present in our
art-age of **DIGITAL HISTORICISM**:
Commemoration Pilgrimage to Stoss for Winning Freedom Battle in 1405,
14 May 2023, Appenzell AI, Switzerland. Foto: Jakob Signer.

